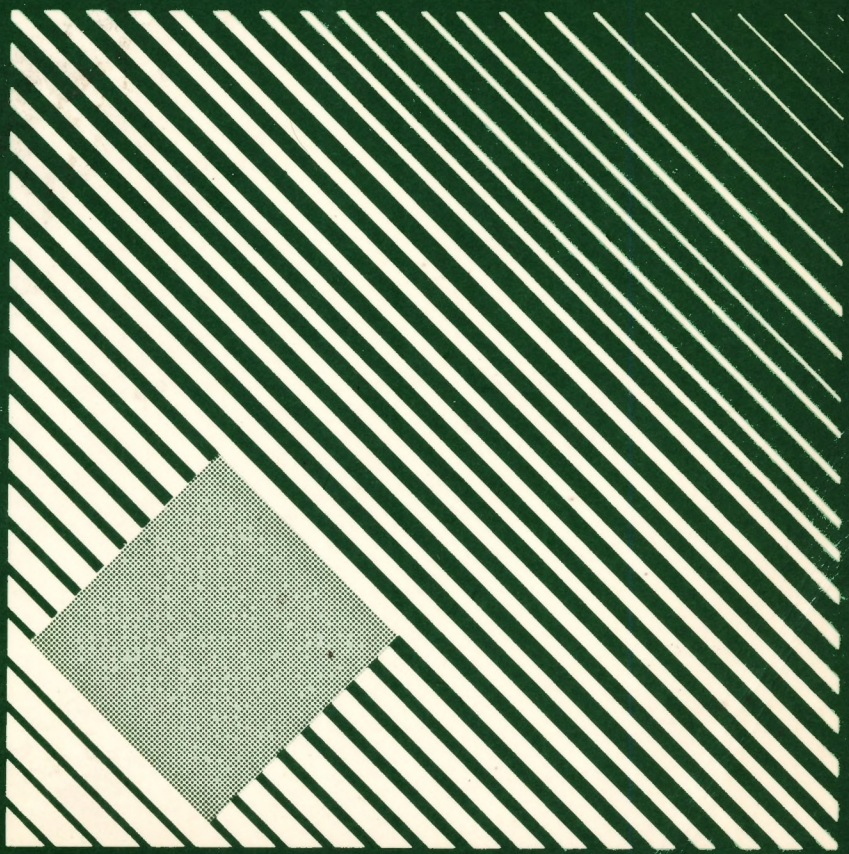
Maurice Cornforth

DIALECTICAL MATERIALISM

An Introduction

Volume 2

Historical Materialism



DIALECTICAL MATERIALISM

An Introduction

by

MAURICE CORNFORTH

Volume Two

HISTORICAL MATERIALISM

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PREFACE

This book contains an outline of the materialist conception of history. This is described as the "application" of general materialist conceptions to the understanding of human society—it could perhaps better be said that from the grasp of the real conditions of human life outlined in the materialist conception of history the more general philosophical ideas of Marxism are derived.

The text was very considerably revised for the second edition in 1962. In the present edition two further revisions have been introduced. First, some explanatory remarks about the "dictatorship of the proletariat" are added at the end of Chapter Four. Second, the "Conclusions" at the very end have been restated. Without basically altering the general content of the earlier conclusions, this section has been rewritten to bring it more into line with contemporary developments.

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CONTENTS

Chapter 1	Scientific Socialism	7
Chapter 2	Materialism and the Science of Society	14
Chapter 3	The Mode of Production . . .	35
Chapter 4	The Fundamental Law of Social Development	55
Chapter 5	The Social Superstructure . .	79
Chapter 6	Class Ideas and Class Rule . .	96
Chapter 7	Socialism and Communism . . .	110
Chapter 8	Towards a Human Way of Life .	130

Chapter One

SCIENTIFIC SOCIALISM

Capitalism and Socialism

The idea of socialism arose and gripped men's minds in modern society because of discontent with the evils of capitalism, and the perception that only by a radical transformation of the entire economic basis of society could these evils be done away with.

In capitalist society the means of production—the land, factories, mills, mines, transport—belong to the capitalists, and production is carried on for capitalist profit. But the essence of socialism is that the means of production become social property, and that, on the basis of social ownership, production is carried on for the benefit of the whole of society.

From its very beginning, capitalism meant a previously undreamed of increase in the powers of producing wealth. But this wealth went to swell the profits of a few, while the mass of the working people were condemned to toil and poverty. To use the new powers of producing wealth, not to enrich a few but to enrich the whole of society, is the aim of socialism.

Great new productive forces have been created in modern society as witness the discoveries of science and the growth of industry. But it becomes ever more evident that the capitalist owners and managers cannot direct the development and use of these forces for the benefit of the majority of the people.

Today the means exist, in modern technique and science, to feed and clothe the whole world; to provide education, culture, opportunity for everyone; to provide all with a high standard of living. If all the discoveries at our disposal were

used, and if supplies were directed where they are most needed, this could undoubtedly be done. Nuclear energy can provide almost unlimited power, automation can lighten labour and turn out goods in profusion, medical science can relieve or stamp out diseases, the biological and agricultural sciences can ensure enough food for a bigger population than the world at present supports. Instead, resources both human and technical remain unemployed. For if all this were done, where would be the profit for the great capitalist monopolies? Meantime, while people still suffer and die from shortages, vast resources are squandered on weapons of destruction. People have even come to fear new knowledge and higher techniques, because they fear that the result of higher techniques may only be crisis and unemployment, and that the result of more knowledge may only be the invention of even more fearful weapons of destruction. The profit system has converted men's highest achievements into threats to their livelihood and very existence. This is the final sign that that system has outlived its time and must be replaced by another.

Socialism means that the vast resources of modern technique are developed and used to meet the needs of the people. Production is not carried on for profit but to satisfy the material and cultural requirements of society. And this is ensured because the means of production, all the means of creating wealth, are taken out of the control of a capitalist minority, whose concern is its own profit, and come under the control of the working people themselves.

Socialist Theory and the Working-Class Movement

But in order to achieve socialism, we need something more than a general idea of socialism as a better order of society than capitalism. We need to understand what social forces must be organised and what opponents they will have to defeat.

The first conceptions of socialism were utopian. The first socialists had the vision of a better order of society, gave it form and colour, and proclaimed it far and wide. But it remained merely a vision. They could not say how to realise it in practice.

The utopians criticised the capitalist order of society as unreasonable and unjust. For them, socialism was based simply on reason and justice; and because they considered that the light of reason belonged equally to all men, they appealed to everyone—and first of all to the rulers of society, as being the best educated and most influential—to embrace the truth of socialism and put it into practice.

They contributed the first exposure and condemnation of capitalism, and the first vision of socialism—a society based on common ownership of the means of production—as the alternative to capitalism. But this vision was spun out of the heads of reformers. The utopians could not show the way to achieve socialism, because they had no conception of the laws of social change and could not point to the real social force capable of creating a new society.

That force is the working class. The capitalist class is bound to resist socialism, because the end of the profit system means the end of the capitalist class. For the working class, on the other hand, socialism means its emancipation from exploitation. Socialism means the end of poverty and insecurity. It means that workers work for themselves and not for the profit of others.

The achievement of socialism depends on the mobilisation of the working class in the fight for socialism, and on its overpowering the resistance of the capitalist class. And in this struggle the working class must seek to unite with itself all those sections—and together they constitute the majority of society—who in one way or another are fleeced by the greed for profits of the ruling capitalist minority.

But more than that. If socialism is to be won, if working-class emancipation from capitalism is to be achieved, then the working-class movement must become conscious of its socialist aim. But this consciousness does not spontaneously arise of itself. It requires the scientific working out of socialist theory, the introduction of this theory into the working-class movement, and the fight for it inside that movement.

The very conditions of life of the workers lead them to combine to defend their standards of life from capitalist

attack, and to improve them. But the trade union struggle to defend and improve working-class standards does not get rid of capitalism. On the contrary, so long as working-class struggle is limited to such purely economic aims, its utmost stretch is to gain concessions from capitalism while continuing to accept the existence of the system. And the movement can pass beyond this phase of fighting for no more than reforms within capitalism only when it equips itself with socialist theory. Only then can it become conscious of its long-term aim of getting rid of capitalism altogether, and work out the strategy and tactics of the class struggle for achieving this aim.

In the history of the working-class movement there have been many leaders concerned with nothing beyond winning concessions from capitalism. They have in effect sought merely temporary gains for different sections of the working class at the expense of the long-term interests of the whole class. This is known as "opportunism". And the root of opportunism in the working-class movement consists in accepting the spontaneous struggle for concessions and reforms as the be-all and end-all of the movement.

If socialism is to be achieved, the working-class movement must not rely only on the spontaneous development of the mass struggle for better conditions. It must equip itself with socialist theory, with the scientific understanding of capitalism and of the position of the different classes under capitalism, with the scientific understanding that emancipation can be achieved only by uniting all forces for the overthrow of capitalism and the establishment of socialism.

Without the guiding and organising force of scientific socialist theory, the working class cannot win victory over capitalism. The union of socialist theory with the mass working-class movement is a condition for the advance from capitalism to socialism.

The Marxist Science of Society

The great contribution of Marxism was to develop scientific socialist theory and to introduce it into the working-class movement.

Marx and Engels based socialism on a scientific understanding of the laws of development of society and of the class struggle. And so they were able to show how socialism could be won, and to arm the working class with knowledge of its historical mission.

Marx did not arrive at his conclusions as a pure research worker, though he did conduct profound research. In the 1840's Marx was engaged as a revolutionary republican and democrat in the movement which led up to the revolutionary year 1848. And he arrived at his conclusions as an active politician, striving to understand the movement in which he participated in order to help guide it to the goal of the people's emancipation from oppression, superstition and exploitation.

These conclusions were formulated in *The Manifesto of the Communist Party* which Marx wrote, in collaboration with Engels, in 1848.

They saw the whole social movement as a struggle between classes; they saw the contending classes themselves as products of the economic development of society; they saw politics as the reflection of the economic movement and of the class struggle; they saw that the bourgeois revolution then in progress, the task of which was to remove the vestiges of feudal rule and establish democracy, was preparing the way for the proletarian, socialist revolution; and they saw that this revolution could only be consummated by the working class conquering political power.

It was only because they espoused the cause of the working class and saw in it the new, rising, revolutionising force in history, that Marx and Engels were able to discover the laws of social change, which those who adopted the standpoint of the exploiting classes could never do.

"Certain historical facts occurred which led to a decisive change in the conception of history," wrote Engels in *Socialism, Utopian and Scientific*. "In 1831 the first working-class rising had taken place at Lyons; between 1838 and 1848 the first national workers' movement, that of the English Chartists, reached its height. The class struggle between proletariat and bourgeoisie came to the front. . . . But the old idealist concep-

tion of history . . . knew nothing of class struggle based on material interests, in fact knew nothing at all of material interests. . . . The new facts made imperative a new examination of all past history."

From this new situation, Engels continued, it became clear: "that all past history was the history of class struggles; that these warring classes are always the product of conditions of production and exchange, in a word, of the economic conditions of their time; that therefore the economic structure of society always forms the real basis from which, in the last analysis, is always to be explained the whole superstructure of legal and political institutions, as well as of the religious, philosophical and other conceptions of each historical period."

From the recognition of the significance of the class struggle in capitalist society came the realisation that the class struggle was likewise waged in previous epochs and that, in fact, the whole of past history since the break-up of the primitive communes was the history of class struggles.

But on what was the class struggle based? On the clash of the material interests of the different classes. Realising this, the key to historical development as a whole had to be sought in the sphere of these material interests. The different classes with their different interests were seen to be "the product of the conditions of production and exchange", of the economic conditions prevailing in society.

Marx, in *Wage-Labour and Capital*, pointed out that "in production men not only act on nature but also on one another. They produce only by co-operating in a certain way and mutually exchanging their activities. In order to produce, they enter into definite connections and relations with one another, and only within these social connections and relations does their action on nature, does production, take place."

Marx and Engels discovered the key to understanding the whole development of society in the investigation of these production relations, i.e., the economic conditions of production and exchange, and of the struggle between classes produced by these economic conditions.

Thus understanding the laws of historical development,

Marx and Engels showed that socialism was not a utopian dream but the necessary outcome of the development of capitalist society and of the working-class struggle against capitalism. They taught the working class to be conscious of its own strength and of its own class interests, and to unite for a determined struggle against the capitalist class, rallying around itself all the forces discontented with capitalism. They showed that it was impossible to get rid of capitalism and establish socialism unless the working class won political power, deprived the capitalist class of all power and stamped out its resistance. And they showed that in order to emerge from the old world and create a new, classless society, the working class must have its own party, which they called the Communist Party.

Chapter Two

MATERIALISM AND THE SCIENCE OF SOCIETY

The Materialist Conception of History

The general theory of the motive forces and laws of social change, developed on the basis of Marx's discoveries, is known as the materialist conception of history, or historical materialism. It was arrived at by applying the materialist world outlook to the solution of social problems. And because he made this application, materialism was with Marx no longer, simply a theory aimed at interpreting the world, but a guide to the practice of changing the world, of building a society without exploitation of man by man.

Above all, historical materialism has a contemporary significance. It is applicable here and now. It leads to conclusions not only about the causes of past events but about the causes of events now taking place, and therefore about what to do, about what policy to fight for, in order to satisfy the real needs of the people.

When modern industry was created there were created the means to produce enough to satisfy fully the needs of every human being, and therefore to realise the age-old dream of universal plenty. The means exist to do it; and the materialist conception of history, by explaining how social relations change and how modern industry came about, shows how it can be done.

It is precisely in this contemporary application that historical materialism demonstrates its scientific character. For the final test of social science, as of all other science, is in its practical application. If historical materialism makes history

into a science, this is because it is not only a theory about how to interpret history but also a theory about how to make history, and therefore the basis for the practical policy of the revolutionary class which is making history today.

Social Relations and the Laws of Social Development

Materialism means explaining what takes place in the material world from the material world itself. The materialist approach to explaining processes of nature means investigating those processes themselves in order to discover their laws of operation. And because human affairs are part of the material world, the materialist approach to explaining social events means likewise investigating social processes in order to discover their laws of operation.

Such investigation must be empirical and scientific. It is not a question of deducing anything about society from the general philosophical principles of materialism, but of applying the normal methods of science—the framing and testing of theories or hypotheses—to the study of society. This is the foundation on which the theory of historical materialism rests. As Engels put it in his speech at Marx's graveside: "Just as Darwin discovered the law of development of organic nature, so Marx discovered the law of development of human history." It is a discovery of science, made and verified by applying scientific methods differing not at all from those applied with equal success in other branches of science.

In the opening pages of *The German Ideology* Marx and Engels remarked that "the first premise of all human history is the existence of living human individuals. Thus the first fact to be established is the physical organisation of these individuals and their consequent relation to the rest of nature". But the subject matter of social science is not the physiology and psychology of human individuals, their individual activities and reactions. That is taken for granted. Human individuals create and sustain society and the typical products of society by entering into social relations with one another; and it is these social relations which are the subject matter of social science.

In the last analysis, when we say that certain social relations

have been formed and certain social phenomena produced, we are referring to what numbers of unspecified human individuals do in association. For instance, if we speak of commodity production we are referring to how they organise their productive activity and distribute its products; if we say that a certain idea has arisen, we are referring to how they speak and act; if we say that certain institutions have been set up, we are referring to how they regulate their affairs. Social science abstracts from the individuals and deals with the social relations. It is not concerned with individual but with aggregate humanity.

Of course, some individuals do occupy a special individual position within social relations. For many social relations depend on placing individuals in special positions—kings, chairmen of boards, presidents, popes and archbishops, leaders of movements, and so on. The individual decisions and actions of those individuals may have wide social repercussions. The character and extent of these must depend, however, upon the social relations within which they are acting. The key problems which social science has to unravel are not problems of the actions and motivations of individuals but problems of the interdependence of social relations. Social relations change and develop. The problem of how such change and development is brought about and of the laws which govern it—the main problem of the scientific understanding of society and its history—is the problem of analysing and sorting out the interdependence of social relations. What are called "laws" regulating society and its development are simply generalised statements of such interdependence.

For instance, what is the famous "law of supply and demand" in economics but a statement of the dependence of the terms of sale upon the relations of sellers and buyers? The sellers bring certain goods to market and the buyers come there with certain requirements and means of paying: that is a social relation between people as sellers and buyers. When the sale is effected and money changes hands, that is also a social relation. The "law of supply and demand" states the dependence of the latter relationship on the former. It is

entirely and exclusively concerned with the interdependence of certain social relations.

No one would deny that *some* social relations are regulated by laws. In particular, when products are produced as commodities economic laws are discoverable regulating their production and exchange. But it has been and still is strenuously denied that there are invariable laws of social development operating throughout human history, in terms of which we can explain how and why social development in general takes place.

In support of this denial it is argued that because each event in human history is unique, and exactly the same circumstances are never repeated, therefore there is no basis for the discovery of invariable laws governing social changes. We can speak, for instance, of the laws of mechanics governing the motions of bodies, because the same mechanical interaction is repeated over and over again; but not so with the events of human history.

This argument rests on an obvious confusion. Of course every event, whether in nature or society, is unique. But in society, as in nature, the same *kind* of event—for instance, a revolution—is often repeated; and *variants* of the same social relations are repeated over and over again. All the conditions are present, therefore, for the discovery of laws. Despite all the manifold changes of society there are certain general relations which are always present in varying forms, because these are basic relations without which no society at all can exist; and from the study of such relations general laws always applicable to the development of any society emerge.

The Foundations of Social Science

It is evident that social relations cannot, like many relations in nature, be studied experimentally. The social scientist cannot set up social relations experimentally in order to discover how they operate; nor can he experimentally separate some social relations from others, for purposes of study. He is himself a member of society, and has to take it as he finds it, in all its baffling complexity. Marx remarked on this difficulty in the

Preface to *Capital*, where he contrasted the investigation of social changes with that of, say, chemical changes. In social analysis, he wrote, "neither microscopes nor chemical reagents are of use. The force of abstraction must replace both". That is to say, where it is not possible to separate certain relations experimentally, they must be separated in the mind of the investigator.

Marx's discovery of the fundamental laws of social development was reached by asking whether any relations can be distinguished which must always be present in any form of society, because they are the condition for any form of social life whatever. Once such relations are abstracted, then hypotheses can be put forward about their interdependencies and these can be checked against the actual social record. The whole development of society is then explained as regulated by the laws of interdependence so formulated. Such was Marx's method.

When the key question is asked the answer becomes strikingly obvious. The necessary condition for any society is that men should associate to produce their material means of subsistence. Without this collective action of men on nature there is no human life, it constitutes the very essential of the human mode of life. The process of social production is, therefore, the primary process of all social life. It is "primary" in this precise sense: that social life begins with it, that it is present continuously throughout all social life, and that no other social activity or social relation can occur unless this primary activity, this primary social relation, sustains it.

From this beginning, Marx went on to frame a general hypothesis, consisting of several interconnected propositions, which together may be said to constitute a general law of social development. The theory will be stated here only in barest outline; it will be reviewed in more detail, and its more important consequences discussed, in the ensuing chapters.

(1) In order to carry on production people must enter into relations of production. These are concerned with property in means of production, and with the mode of distribution of the product, and in their totality they define the economic

structure of society.

(2) People enter into relations of production, and so associate in an economic organisation, independent of any conscious decision but corresponding to the character of their productive forces. That is to say, people who depend for their subsistence on certain production techniques evolve property relations—and eventually class relations—appropriate to those techniques. For instance, a primitive hunting tribe will live the social life of primitive communism. When animals are domesticated, the herds will tend to become the property of particular families within the community. When power-driven machinery is first introduced, it is as the property of capitalists who employ wage-labour. And so on.

(3) Social institutions, and with them prevailing systems of ideas, will then arise corresponding to the economic structure of society. They will be such as to serve the carrying on of the prevailing mode of production. For instance, a primitive tribe could hardly possess a legislative assembly, or a standing army and police force, or universities; on the other hand, such institutions are required for carrying on a modern capitalist society. Only when a certain economic basis exists do such institutions, with their corresponding ideologies, arise.

These three propositions make up the key to explaining how social development proceeds and how the various historical features of society arise and change. Corresponding to certain forces of production certain relations of production come into being. Within these production relations new forces of production eventually develop. Then the situation arises when, in Marx's words, the old production relations begin to act as "fetters" upon the further development of production. The relations of production have then to be changed, and the whole "superstructure" of ideas and institutions is changed with them.

The theory thus postulates a law of interdependence between production, the relations of production, and the social superstructure of institutions and ideas. And it is a hypothesis which can be checked against the known facts and is verified by them. Indeed, it is hard to imagine how anything different

could arise in society. Could production relations arise which were inappropriate to the given forces of production? Or when they become fetters on production, would it be possible to avoid a struggle for new production relations? Again, could a society survive, the institutions of which failed to serve its basic economic processes? Could such institutions possibly be formed? And when such institutions grow outmoded, would it be possible to avoid a struggle to change them? If we ask such questions as these the laws formulated by Marx begin to have the same obvious and compelling look as, for instance, the laws of thermodynamics. One might as well ask whether a physical system could create energy from nothing. If an engine were built which ran without fuel, or could do more work without more fuel, that would falsify the laws of thermodynamics. And if a society were created which kept going without production, or in which economic structure was not adapted to production and social superstructure to economic basis, that would falsify historical materialism. But there is no such engine, and no such society. Such fundamental laws of science are always verified by all the relevant facts, and no instances which would falsify them are ever to be found.

Historical materialism supplies a foundation for social science in much the same way as the theory of evolution by natural selection supplies a foundation for biological science. Whatever species may be considered, it evolved by natural selection and that conditions its entire character. Similarly, whatever society may be considered, it came to be what it is by adaptation of production relations to production, and of ideas and institutions to production relations.

Indeed, Darwin arrived at the theory of natural selection by very much the same "method of abstraction" as Marx—more or less simultaneously—employed in the theory of historical materialism. Darwin's theory grew from the fundamental consideration that every species lives by adaptation to an environment, just as Marx's theory grew from the consideration that every society lives by a mode of production. But this same type of abstraction is employed in *all* fundamental scientific theory. Newton, for example, employed it in arriving at his

formulation of the laws of motion: the condition of existence of any body at any instant is that it has a certain motion of its own and is acted on by external forces. Marx employed it a second time in his special investigation, in *Capital*, of commodity production. He began that investigation with the consideration that the one thing all commodities have in common is that they are products of human labour, and that therefore what people are doing when they exchange commodities is to exchange the products of definite quantities of socially-necessary labour-time.

General Laws and Particular Events

All fundamental scientific theory is very general in character and, consequently, very flexible. It can show the same general connections holding in circumstances so widely different that there appear to be no such connections. It can explain the operations of a large variety of particular causes, and recognise in particular instances the operation of particular causes which could not have been forecast in terms of the general laws alone.

Historical materialism shares this breadth and flexibility. Just as Darwinism can account for many odd features of species in terms of particular causes operating within the general process of natural selection, so Marxism can account for the most varied social phenomena in terms of particular causes operating within the general process of adaptation of relations of production to production. It is no objection to the theory to say that it is incapable of predicting such particular causes. The point is that it is capable of explaining them and their effects within the general process of social evolution.

For example, in the development of English society under the Tudors it so happened that a particular quarrel arose between Henry VIII and the Pope, because Henry wanted to divorce his wife and the Pope refused permission. Henry broke with the Pope, and this gave him an excuse to confiscate the Church lands and divide them amongst his cronies—an action which had very far-reaching economic and political consequences. There is no law of social development in accordance with which Henry was bound to become dissatisfied with his

wife and quarrel with the Pope about it. On the contrary, these particular events which had such large effects arose from particular causes which could not be deduced from any general laws and were relatively accidental. But the fact that Henry was able to take advantage of these events, that he could get away with the confiscation of Church lands, and that these actions brought about changes within class relations —all that is explicable only through the contradictory social relations which had come into being at that particular period. Moreover, in other places where similar social contradictions existed similar economic and political changes were effected. Other European monarchs, who had no trouble with their wives, were making the same break with the Church and its institutions, as a result of the same deep-seated and general causes, though the individual circumstances and causes varied greatly in different cases.

The laws which regulate the development of social relations operate through the relatively accidental circumstances and actions of the individuals who live within those social relations. But the laws are not some kind of "fate" externally imposed upon human individuals. It is the very life-process of the individuals—the fact that they are human—which leads to their entering into relations which exhibit those laws. Just as the attractions and repulsions of the elements of a physical system lead to their entering into various combinations, so the dependence of human individuals one upon another, and of all on their joint action on nature, leads to their entering into social relations and to the development of those social relations.

Thus human society develops through a succession of relatively accidental events, all of which can be traced to their particular causes and have their particular effects, and which in their totality present a law-governed process of the development of social relations.

Human Intentions and Objective Law

Society consists of human beings, and there is therefore an essential distinction between social processes and natural processes. "In nature there are only blind, unconscious

agencies acting upon one another," wrote Engels in *Ludwig Feuerbach* (chap. 4). "In the history of society, on the other hand, the actors are all endowed with consciousness, are men acting with deliberation or passion, working towards definite goals; nothing happens without a conscious purpose, without an intended aim."

Social effects are brought about by the conscious, intentional activity of human beings, who choose what they will do. And this circumstance has sometimes been held to be incompatible with the view that social development is regulated by objective laws. If, it is argued, social development depends upon human intelligence, choice and will, it cannot be regulated by laws. Yet the conclusion does not follow. For the fact that people change their social relations by their own voluntary actions does not imply that in these changes there are no general laws of the interdependence of social relations. On the contrary, whenever people enter into certain relations this fact influences other of their relations; within the totality of changing social relations there are laws of interdependence, and people cannot establish or change their relations just as they like.

When we consider people's desires and intentions, in their social context, we should ask: what influences their intentions and their choices, and what determines the outcome of their intentional actions? For people do not set aims before themselves regardless of their circumstances; and when people choose what to do and act with certain intentions the results of their actions are often not what they intended. Clearly, therefore, it is not possible to explain the actual development of society simply from the intentions in the minds of the members of society.

The ideas in men's minds, the aims they set themselves, and the emotions they feel, arise in response to their material conditions of existence, which include relationship with nature and relationship with one another in society. The forces bringing about social change are not "ideas" or "aims" in the abstract, nor abstract individuals each of whom decides independently what he will do, but, as Marx and Engels put it in *The German Ideology*, "real, active men, as they are conditioned

by a definite development of their productive forces and of the intercourse corresponding to these"; and they form their ideas and aims "on the basis of their real life-process". It is the necessary condition of any human life that people should produce their means of subsistence, and that they should enter into production relations corresponding with their productive forces. This happens independent of anyone's idea or intention or choice. But possessing certain productive forces and living within certain production relations, people then form their ideas and intentions corresponding to these real-life conditions in which they find themselves.

From these conditions arise definite interests, contradictions of interest, aims and ambitions. Ideas, passions, plans and intentions arise in the minds of individuals accordingly, in response to those conditions of life. And so social life proceeds.

In a primitive hunting tribe, for instance, it is natural that the people's plans should be mostly confined to hunting, and that the height of any individual's ambition should be to become a chief. If, perhaps through some change of environment, they get an interest in cultivation or domestication of animals, then other plans, other ambitions arise. The people keep their society going by their own initiative and efforts; but the direction of their efforts is conditioned by their material mode of life.

In a modern capitalist society, of course, conditions are far more complex and include profound social contradictions. When wage-labour is employed, for instance, the workers have a common interest in improving their standards of life; the intention of doing so is born in their minds, and trade unions are organised to do it. Obviously, this is bound to happen. Trade union organisation is as inevitable in capitalist society as it is inevitable that water will seek its own level. But trade unions are created by nothing but the workers' own efforts, by their acting on their own initiative, in a conscious intentional way, with each one choosing whether to join a trade union or not. The point is that the direction of the efforts is determined by the material conditions of life. At the same time, the capitalists will also be pursuing their own interests, some

well-meaning people will be making proposals to reconcile conflicting interests, some of the workers will be conceiving ambitions to raise their individual status by using trade union positions, some of the capitalists will understand this and set about buying them out, and so on, and so on. A vast complex of differing and conflicting aims and ideas is born from the given conditions, and eventually the conditions are changed by the social activities of the people so motivated.

What, then, determines the character of the changes? Not simply the socially-conditioned intentions of the makers of change. For, as Engels wrote in *Ludwig Feuerbach* (chap. 4), "numerous desired ends cross and conflict with one another, or these ends themselves are from the outset incapable of realisation, or the means of attaining them are insufficient. Thus the conflict of innumerable individual wills and individual actions in the domain of history produces a state of affairs entirely analogous to that in the realm of unconscious nature. . . . The many individual wills active in history for the most part produce results quite other than those they intended—often quite the opposite".

Just as the material mode of production is the foundation for the various different motivations which develop within society, so it also determines which ends are practical and which are not, and what the eventual outcome of the conflicting motivations will be.

The French Revolution, for example, was the explosive result of contradictions within the old society. From the position they occupied within the economic structure of that society, the peasants, town workers and rising bourgeoisie were all frustrated in the pursuit of their material interests, and all consequently oppressed under the rule of the nobility. They rose for "liberty, equality and fraternity", and smashed the feudal fetters. But what resulted was something not intended by the majority of those taking part in the revolution. As soon as the feudal fetters were smashed, free scope was afforded to the economic activity of the bourgeoisie—and the result was the development of capitalism. Fighting for liberty, what they did was to give nascent capitalism the chance to consolidate

itself. This happened thanks to the initiative and efforts of the revolutionaries; but the final results of that initiative and those efforts depended on the sum total of social relations in French society.

Thus while society is composed of individuals who together make their own history by their own conscious activity, we must look behind people's conscious aims, intentions and motives to the economic development of society in order to find the laws of historical development. It is there that we discover the laws which regulate the changes in the circumstances conditioning people's actions, the transformations of material interests into conscious motives in their heads, and the final outcome of their activity.

"Men make their own history," wrote Marx in *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* (chap. 1). "But they do not make it just as they please. They do not make it under circumstances chosen by themselves, but under circumstances directly encountered, given and transmitted from the past."

Like many other laws now known to science, the fundamental laws of social development, which regulate how these circumstances come into being and how they are changed, do not deal with the determination of individual events but with the consequences over a period of time of a large number of individual interactions. They state the consequences of individuals living in society. The intercourse of individuals in society must always lead to their using such productive forces as are to hand, to their entering into production relations corresponding to those productive forces, and to motivations and conflicts, based on those production relations, through which production relations are eventually changed corresponding to the development of new productive forces.

The Law of Progress

The fundamental law of social development is that of the adaptation of relations of production to production. The social relations of production have to be adapted to the social action of men on nature whereby men produce their means of life. The operation of this law brings about, with time, the pro-

gressive development of human society—that is, an irreversible progression from an earlier stage to a later stage. And that is because, from time to time, people are able to develop their forces of production. Given the actual physical, chemical and biological processes of the earth's surface, and the presence of men, employing brain and hand to use those processes for their own ends, there exists the possibility of a progressive development of techniques, each of which is sooner or later explored, though a long time may pass before favourable conditions arise for such exploration. And from this development of forces of production follow corresponding modifications and changes in relations of production and in the entire superstructure of social relations based on the relations of production. Thus human societies develop from formations based on lower production techniques to those based on higher production techniques. The distance traversed from stone tools to the automated factory and the nuclear reactor is the measure of human progress to date.

Progress, as so defined, cannot be due—as Hegel supposed human development was due—to any universal spirit mysteriously working itself out in human destinies and guiding them towards some end, any more than particular misfortunes and catastrophes that befall people are due to a malign fate manipulating human puppets towards their destruction. The whole conception of an external influence at work in human affairs—whether it is called the Absolute Spirit, God, Fate, or merely the influence of the stars, makes very little difference—is an idealist conception, totally foreign to science and therefore to Marxism. The only agency which determines human affairs is the agency of people themselves, wresting their livelihood from nature and entering into social relations to do so.

Thus determined, progress is naturally neither steady nor uniform. Important new techniques—such as the wheel, iron working, the use of water power, and so on—are introduced only at times and places where there occurs a coincidence of circumstances favourable to their discovery and application. But once introduced, new techniques bring power and benefits to their users which mean that they are not likely to be

given up. Once introduced, new techniques are not lost again, but go on being used and eventually serve as the basis for still higher techniques. Moreover, big changes in production and consequently in production relations tend to be localised, to occur at long intervals, and to spread from a given locality.

In the history of mankind to date there have been two great changes in production of decisive importance. The first, which occurred only after hundreds of thousands of years of primitive techniques practised by scattered tribes after the birth of the human species, was the introduction of agriculture. This led to the division of society into classes and to the stormy, though comparatively short, period of man's evolution in which man was exploited by man and his history became the history of class struggles. The second was the introduction of modern industry, based on the general use of sources of energy other than human or animal muscle-power. This led to the extreme polarisation of class relations under capitalism and the birth among the exploited of the irresistible movement towards communism. The production relations adapted to modern industry, once it has developed sufficiently, are those of communism. Thanks to modern techniques, which include means of transport and communication, and to the capitalist drive for profit, once capitalism became established in one region it very quickly reached out until it brought the whole world under its sway. Thus modern industry meant the end of the process in which social development was localised and progress confined to separate regions, and the beginning of a world process of the advance of all humanity to classless communist society based on a uniformly high level of technique.

Scientific Theory and Social Practice

Knowledge of the laws of social development brings knowledge of the real forces at work in contemporary society and of how that society can and must be changed.

When production is outstripping production relations, there arises a historical necessity of changing those relations in order that people can carry forward production and enjoy the benefits it is capable of bringing them. To effect this change is a

historical task. Such historical necessity and the corresponding historical task is an objective fact, completely independent of anyone's desires or intentions. To speak of it expresses not simply an aspiration or political programme, clothed in grand words, but an actually existing set-up of human relations.

Capitalism contains such a necessity and such a task—the necessity and task of advancing to socialism. And within the capitalist relations, one class, the working class, is by virtue of its position within those relations the social force to carry out the job. In this sense we may speak of its having a historical mission. This is a fact, whether anyone knows it or not, and whether anyone does anything about it or not. Marxism did not invent the historical mission of the working class, but discovered it.

In a similar way, in the bourgeois revolution a necessity and a task existed, and the nascent bourgeoisie had the mission of establishing a new order of society—which they successfully did. In the course of time tasks are fulfilled, because the existence of the task means that circumstances conspire to impel people towards its fulfilment. If one generation fails, it remains for the next generation. "Mankind sets itself only such tasks as it can solve," wrote Marx in the Preface to *Critique of Political Economy*, "since . . . the task itself arises only when the material conditions for its solution already exist or are at least in the process of formation."

The subject matter of social science is man's own social activity, whereas natural science deals with the object of that activity, the materials and forces of nature. Hence social science differs from natural science in that, by its discovery of the laws of development of social activity, it defines the historical task facing mankind at a given time and, therefore, the social end or goal of activity. Natural science, on the other hand, is concerned solely with means: it shows how natural forces can be used, and that is all. Physics, for example, by discovering the laws of physical processes, enables us to use those processes for our own purposes, as means to our own ends: it does not define those ends.

To define the historical task in contemporary society is, of

course, at the same time to make a prediction, namely, that that task is likely eventually to be fulfilled. Thus Marxism does make a definite prediction: that capitalism will not continue indefinitely, and that—barring the possible catastrophe of mankind using the recent discovery of nuclear energy to destroy itself—it will be superseded by world communist society. But prediction is never the main function of either natural or social science. It is only secondary to the main function, which is to enable us to regulate our social activity, in production and in other spheres, in the light of discovery of the objective properties and laws of nature and society. So while the discovery of the laws of social development does imply a prediction about the future development of society, its primary significance is that it defines practical goals and practical policies towards realising them. Those who fail to grasp this are confusing Marx with Old Moore. In social activity, knowledge of the laws of development becomes itself a force in that development, and is enlarged and clarified as the development proceeds.

Another peculiarity of social science as compared with natural science is that it discovers and defines its own reasons for existence. The very definition of the contemporary task explains why scientific knowledge—a scientific theory—is needed to enable the task to be fulfilled. All earlier social formations came into being through members of society spontaneously pursuing their own immediate interests, as these arose from an existing mode of production. Capitalism, for instance, was not created by people acting on any scientific theory of capitalism, but by people following their noses in circumstances favourable to the development of capitalist relations, as a result of which the members of the rising bourgeois class seized any opportunity for profit and acted in combination against anyone and anything that blocked them. With the working class in capitalist society, on the other hand, spontaneous action leads no further than organisation to secure higher wages, shorter hours and better living conditions. To advance to socialism requires deliberate measures to change the relations of production, and the prior conquest of political

power by the working class in order to be able to institute such measures. To do that requires theoretical knowledge of what is to be done, based on the scientific investigation of social processes, and a mass movement informed by scientific theory.

Every revolutionising discovery in history has been made only when conditions were ripe for it and the need for it existed. Thus the great discoveries of modern natural science were made only when the development of the mode of production had created the conditions and the need for them. The same is true of the social discoveries of Marx.

The Theory of the Working-Class Movement

The establishment of fundamental scientific theory in any field has always meant the overthrow of old prejudices, and so has run up against the opposition of definite interests. This applies still more with the science of society. Marx's discovery showed how men form societies, and frame their ideas and principles, on the basis of the material process of production. This threw down the last stronghold of idealism—the conception of human consciousness as having its ultimate source in something other than the material world; and with it the whole idea of the sanctity, rationality and permanence of any human institutions. In particular, Marx's discovery demonstrated the contradictions of capitalism and the necessity of replacing it by socialism. Obviously, if social science demonstrates these conclusions then not only does it meet with opposition but it simply cannot be accepted at all within the capitalist order.

Marxism arose as the theory of the working-class movement, which alone needed such a theory, and within the ranks of which alone could it be worked out, accepted and used; and after socialism was victorious in some countries, it was developed further as the theory of socialism and communism. The so-called social science of the bourgeois establishment has of course had to admit—by the back door, as it were, and usually without acknowledgement—some selected Marxist ideas; but the fundamental theory is consistently repudiated. In consequence, bourgeois social science remains at a primitive, descriptive

level, without fundamental theory. And as for the definition of social goals, these are treated as the subject of morals or religion or politics, as distinct from science.

The use of Marxist theory to the working-class movement is threefold. It arms the movement with scientific knowledge of the actual position of the working class. It enables the movement scientifically to formulate practical aims. And it guides the movement in working out the necessary strategy and tactics for achieving those aims.

The working-class movement cannot transform society without the benefit of fundamental theory. And this theory teaches it to keep practical goals in sight rather than dream of utopian ideals, and to base its policies not on general precepts and exhortations but on recognition of the real material conditions and needs of the people.

In the application of science in the politics of class struggle a distinction must be made between certain general and invariable principles, on the one hand, and particular policies framed to cope with particular situations and phases of struggle on the other.

It is necessary to pursue a policy of working-class struggle against the capitalist class, uniting always the maximum forces to defeat the main enemy; this struggle must be carried to the point where the working class, with its allies, is able to gain political power to establish socialism and overcome all resistance against it; and to achieve this position of power, the working class must be led by a political party dedicated to the aim of socialism and guided by scientific socialist theory. These are inviolable principles to abandon which amounts in practice to abandoning the goal of socialism and the means to realise it.

Within the framework of general principles there is then the problem of finding the right policies to meet each eventuality that arises. And here, it must be allowed, a large element of variation and improvisation comes in. Those dogmatists have a strange idea of applying social science, who imagine that it is possible to state in advance everything that is going to happen, and to lay down hard and fast rules for determining

correct policies.

In the working-class struggle it is possible and necessary to make an analysis of the salient facts of a given situation, to forecast the probable behaviour of individuals, groups and classes in such a situation, and in the light of that to arrive at a plan of action. But at the same time, control is lacking over nearly all these factors; even the way in which decisions taken within the movement are carried out depends on the tightness or looseness of organisation, the waging of internal controversies, and all manner of subjective factors influencing individuals. Hence the contingent and the unforeseen always play a large part in the politics of class struggle, and a wise leadership is one which has no illusions of infallibility and is always on the alert to draw conclusions from new experiences.

Social Science and Communism

The consolidation of socialism, followed by the evolution of socialism into communism, means the end of exploitation of man by man and with that the end of class struggles. Evidently, therefore, the future conditions of human social activity will, in that event, be very different from the past. So different will they be that Marx, in the Preface to *Critique of Political Economy*, wrote that the transition to socialism "brings the prehistory of human society to a close".

With communism, as the *Communist Manifesto* put it, "all production has been concentrated in the hands of a vast association of the whole nation". And then, to quote Engels in *Socialism, Utopian and Scientific*, "man's own social organisation, hitherto confronting him as a necessity imposed by nature and history, becomes the result of his own free action. The extraneous objective forces which have hitherto governed history pass under the control of man himself". It is then no longer a question of waging class struggle in conditions under which many factors determining the outcome are beyond control, but of planning the basic processes of social life for the satisfaction of human needs.

This implies that the whole mode of application of social science is changed. Its application becomes a matter of

estimating the material needs of society, and the current material and human resources available, and of planning production and distribution accordingly. Thus in its application social science becomes an exact, mathematical and quantitative discipline, like the natural sciences applied in the techniques of production.

This change corresponds to the situation in which, as Engels also puts it, "the government of persons has been replaced by the administration of things". The task of social science under communism is not to work out ways and means of manipulating human beings so as to force or cajole them into some predetermined pattern of social activity. The task is to work out the plan of production and distribution for the whole community, to be undertaken with the minimum of labour, so that people may on that basis freely enjoy that blossoming forth of human energy which is for man an end in itself.

Writing of the tasks of science in his early *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts*, Marx concluded: "Natural science will in time subsume under itself the science of man, just as the science of man will subsume under itself natural science; there will be *one* science." The subject of science will be the laws of development of nature and human society, and the ways and means of man's securing the continuous satisfaction in his social life of all his needs. The discovery of the fundamental laws of man's social activity was an essential step towards this unification of the sciences which is necessary as a means to securing the flowering of human life.

Chapter Three

THE MODE OF PRODUCTION

Production of the Means of Life

Historical materialism finds the key to the laws of development of society in "the simple fact that mankind must first of all eat, drink, have shelter and clothing, before it can pursue politics, science, art, religion, etc." (Engels, *Speech at the Graveside of Karl Marx.*)

Before people can do anything else, they must obtain the means of life—food, clothing and shelter. And they obtain the means of life, not as a free gift from nature, but by associating together to produce their necessities of life and to exchange the things produced. Only on the basis of associating to produce and exchange the means of life can they develop and pursue any of their other social interests.

Hence "the production of the means to support human life and, next to production, the exchange of things produced . . . is the basis of every social order. . . . In every society that has appeared in history, the distribution of the products and with it the division of society into classes, is determined by what is produced and how it is produced and how the product is exchanged." (Engels, *Socialism, Utopian and Scientific*, chap. 3.)

In this way historical materialism traces back the ultimate cause of the whole movement of society to the social activity of men in the production and exchange of the means of life—that is, to the conditions of material life of society and to changes in the conditions of material life.

The way in which people produce and exchange their means of life is known as the *mode of production.* Every society is based on a mode of production, which is what ultimately

determines the character of all social activities and institutions.

Production and Property

The mode of production is always social, because each individual does not produce the whole of his material needs for himself, solely by his own labour, independent of other individuals. The material goods required by the community are produced by the labour of many individuals, who thus carry on, as Marx put it, a "mutual exchange of activities" in producing the social product which is distributed among the community.

So in considering the mode of production we must distinguish first of all the forces which people bring into operation in order to produce the products—the actual material means by which production is undertaken; and secondly, the mutual relations into which people enter in producing and exchanging the products.

We must distinguish the *forces of production* and the *relations of production*. These together define the mode of production. Thus a given mode of production consists of entering into certain relations of production in order to employ certain forces of production. And different modes of production are distinguished by differences in the forces of production and the relations of production.

What exactly do we denote by *forces of production?*

In order to produce, instruments of production are necessary, that is, tools, machines, means of transport, and so on. But these do not produce anything by themselves. It is people who make and use them. Without people with the skill to make and use the instruments of production, no production is possible.

The forces of production, therefore, consist of the instruments of production, and people, with their production experience and skill, who use these instruments. A labour force, with its experience and skill, is part of the forces of production; and the greater its experience and the greater its skill, the more potent a force of production it is.

Later, science becomes a major ingredient of the forces of production.

And what do we mean by the *relations of production?*

These relations are partly simple and direct relations which people enter into with one another in the actual production process itself—simple and direct relations between people engaged in a common productive task.

But when people carry on production they must needs enter into social relations, not only with one another, but also with the *means of production* which they are utilising.

By the "means of production" we denote something more than the instruments of production. We denote all those means which are necessary to produce the finished product—including not only the instruments (which are part of the forces of production), but also land, raw materials, buildings in which production is undertaken, and so on.

In undertaking production, then, it is necessary for people socially to regulate their mutual relations to the means of production. And this is how *property* relations arise. In social production, the means of production become the property of various people or groups of people. For in carrying on production and exchange it is necessary that some arrangement should be made, binding on the members of society, by which it is known who is entitled to dispose of the various means of production and of the product which is produced by working with them.

This regulation of people's mutual relations to the means of production, and consequently of their share of the product, is not undertaken as a result of any one collective and deliberate act—of any general decision or "social contract". It comes about by an unconscious or spontaneous process. People come to regulate their mutual relations to the means of production, and so also to regulate the disposal of the social product, in a way adapted to the forces of production—since otherwise they could not carry on production. And entering into these relations in the process of production, they become conscious of them as property relations which are socially obligatory and legally binding.

In the very primitive production carried on by a tribe of hunters, the hunters enter into simple, direct relations with one another as fellow hunters, fellow tribesmen; and the land they hunt over and the beasts they hunt are not regarded as the property of any particular individuals or groups. The whole tribe organises hunting expeditions, and what they bring back from the hunt is common property and is shared out among the tribesmen.

But when division of labour arises, and one person specialises in producing this and another in producing that, then the instruments used begin to be regarded as the property of particular persons, and so does the product produced become the property of the producer, to be disposed of by himself. Similarly, when animals are domesticated and herds are raised, herds become the property of particular families, and of the head of the family. At a later stage, land becomes private property.

Thus as a result of the development of the forces of production—for the development of agriculture, handicrafts, and so on, is precisely a development of the forces of production—and as a result of the division of labour which accompanies this development, there gradually arises ownership of means of production by individual people or groups of people. In other words, private property arises.

Here it can already be seen that the driving force in social development is the development of the forces of production.

Property relations are essentially social relations between people, arising out of production. At first sight, property relations look like simple two-term relations between individual people and things, between individual property-owners and the property they own. This is not so, however. The appearance is illusory. Robinson Crusoe on his island was not a property-owner but simply a man on an island. Property relations are complex social relations between people in society—complex relations between men in society, not simple relations between men and things. In the production which they carry on, men establish social relations, or relations of production, between one another whereby the means of production which

they utilise are the property of this or that individual, or of this or that group, and similarly with the product produced.

Property relations, therefore, are ways of regulating people's mutual relationships in the process of utilising the means of production and disposing of the product.

To speak of property is simply a way of giving legal expression to these mutual relations of people in society. As property relations, these appear as obligatory relations, binding on society and all the members of society.

Now, therefore, we can define the relations of production as the mutual relations into which people enter in the process of production and disposal of the product, and of which they become conscious as property relations.

The relations of production obtaining in any particular society are said to constitute the *economic structure* of that society.

Exploitation

The products of productive activity are appropriated in various different ways and so differently distributed among the members of society, according to the type of economic structure prevailing.

What determines the way in which, in different societies, the product is appropriated?

In general, it is the form of ownership of the means of production, the nature of the property relations, which determines the form of appropriation and the way in which the means of life are distributed.

In the most primitive communities the means of production are communally owned, they are held in common by the producers. This is a consequence of the very primitive character of the instruments of production. With only very primitive tools and implements, division of labour has hardly developed, people have to work in common in order to survive, and work in common leads to the common ownership of the means of production. The fruits of production, such as they are, are accordingly shared by the whole community. Just as the means of production are not the property of any particular individual or group, so the product is not appropriated by any individual

or group. This primitive mode of life is neither comfortable nor cultured nor secure, but it does exhibit within the tribe brotherhood and communal solidarity.

In socialist society, again, the means of production are socially owned. And then once more the product is socially appropriated, being distributed "to each according to his labour" in the first stage of socialist society, and "to each according to his needs" in the stage of fully developed communist society.

But in all the communities known to history between primitive communism and socialism—between primitive production and modern large-scale social production—means of production are not socially owned but are the property of individuals or groups, and means of production of crucial importance are the property of a minority of the community. As a result, those who own these means of production are able, by virtue of their position as owners, to appropriate the lion's share of the product. And so it becomes possible for them to live on the fruits of the labour of others, in other words, to exploit others. Those who do not own means of production are compelled to work for the benefit of those who do.

How does such a state of affairs come about?

In the first place, the division of labour breaks up the primitive system of communal production by a whole tribe and results in ownership of means of production gradually passing into the hands of particular individuals and groups. With this comes the private appropriation of the product, for the product is appropriated by whoever owns the means of production. As herds pass out of the common possession of the tribe into the ownership of individual heads of families, as cultivated land is allotted to the use of single families, as handicrafts appear, so the corresponding product ceases to be a communal possession and is privately appropriated.

Further, with private property there begins also the transformation of the product into a commodity—a process which is finally completed in capitalist society, when practically the whole product takes the form of commodities.

It is when products are exchanged for other products that

we call them "commodities": commodities are products produced for the purpose of exchanging them for other products. "The rise of private property in herds and articles of luxury," wrote Engels in his *Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State* (chap. 5), "led to exchange between individuals, to the transformation of products into commodities." For while in a communal mode of production people share out their products amongst themselves, thus carrying on "a mutual exchange of activities" but not an exchange of products, when private property develops the owner does not necessarily require the product he has appropriated for himself but exchanges it for other products.

And this has far-reaching effects. "When the producers no longer directly consumed their products themselves, but let it pass out of their hands in the act of exchange, they lost control of it," Engels continued. "They no longer knew what became of it; the possibility was there that one day it would be used against the producer to exploit and oppress him."

As commodity exchange grows and, with it, the use of money, it acts as a powerful force in further breaking up all former communal modes of production, concentrating the ownership of property into the hands of some, while others are dispossessed. The inevitable result of the growth of private property is the division of the community into "haves" and "have-nots", those with property and those without it, possessors and dispossessed.

In the second place, the division of labour, from which these results follow, is linked with a growth of the productivity of labour. Where formerly the productive labour of a whole tribe could scarcely produce enough to satisfy the minimum requirements of all the producers, now labour produces a surplus. Those who work can produce enough to satisfy their own essential needs, and more besides. Hence there arises the possibility that those who own means of production may appropriate to themselves, without labour, the surplus from the labour of others. And once this possibility has come into being, it is soon taken advantage of.

An early result is slavery. Once the producer can produce

by his labour more than he himself consumes, it becomes worth while for some people to enslave others. Thus there appear masters and slaves, the masters appropriating to themselves the whole product of the slaves' labour and allowing the slaves only as much as is necessary to keep them alive.

Slavery is the simplest and most direct form of exploitation of man by man. That does not imply that it was necessarily the first; various ways in which a chief or proprietor extracted services and tribute from others reduced to various degrees of dependence on him are probably at least as ancient. Another simple form of exploitation is the feudal, the exploitation of serfs by feudal proprietors such as was widely practised in Europe during the Middle Ages. Here the lord does not own the serf as the master does the slave, but he owns the land and the serf is effectively tied to the land, whether by law or by force of circumstances: the serf is then permitted to get his living from the land on condition that he renders up to the lord as his due a part of the produce. A third form of exploitation is the capitalist, the exploitation of wage-workers by capitalists. Here the workers are legally free, in the sense that they can go where they like and work for whom they like, but are deprived of means of production and can make a living only by selling their labour-power to the capitalists. The latter, as owners of the means of production, appropriate the product.

But whatever the form of exploitation, the substance is always the same: the producers produce a surplus over and above their own essential requirements, and this surplus is appropriated by non-producers by virtue of their ownership of some form of property.

For the producers, exploitation therefore means that only a part of their total labour is used by them for themselves, to produce their own requirements, and the rest is taken and used by another. When the productivity of labour has risen so that producers can produce a surplus above what they need for themselves, a part of their labour becomes surplus labour—and exploitation means that this surplus labour is taken and its product appropriated by another, by virtue of ownership of property. By taking other people's

labour, the exploiters can live well without having to work themselves.

"The essential difference," wrote Marx in *Capital* (vol. I, chap. 9, sect. 1), "between the various economic forms of society, between, for instance, a society based on slave labour and one based on wage labour, lies only in the mode in which this surplus labour is in each case extracted from the actual producer, the labourer."

It is the development of production and the development of property which give rise to exploitation. Exploitation means that some people, the minority of society, are by virtue of their ownership of property living without labour on the fruits of the labour of others, of the majority.

It follows that in every mode of production which involves the exploitation of man by man, the social product is so distributed that the majority of the people, the people who labour, are condemned to toil for no more than the barest necessities of life. Sometimes, it is true, favourable circumstances arise when they can win more, but more often they get the barest minimum—and at times not even that. On the other hand, a minority, the owners of the means of production, the property owners, enjoy leisure and luxury. Society is divided into rich and poor.

It further follows that if we are ever to do away with the extremes of poverty and wealth, then this can never be achieved simply by calling for a new mode of distribution of the social product. Capitalist society, for example, cannot be reformed simply by decreeing a more equal distribution of products, as is envisaged in the reformist slogans of "fair distribution of the proceeds of labour" or "fair shares for all". For the distribution of the means of consumption is based on the ownership of the means of production. It is the latter which must be attacked.

"The so-called distribution relations," wrote Marx in *Capital* (vol. III, chap. 51), "correspond to and arise from historically determined specific forms of the process of production and mutual relations entered into by men in the production process of human life. The historical character of these

distribution relations is the historical character of production relations, of which they express merely one aspect. Capitalist distribution differs from those forms of distribution which arise from other modes of production, and every form of distribution disappears with the specific form of production from which it is descended and to which it corresponds."

Classes and Class Struggles

With the development of social production beyond the primitive commune, the community is divided into groups occupying different places in social production as a whole, with different relationships to the means of production and therefore different methods of acquiring their share of the product. Such groups constitute the social *classes*, and their relations constitute the class relations or class structure of a given society.

The existence of classes is a consequence of the division of labour in social production. From the division of labour follow forms of private property, and thence the division of society into classes. "The various stages of development in the division of labour are just so many different forms of ownership," wrote Marx and Engels in *The German Ideology*. "That is, the existing stage in the division of labour determines also the relations of individuals to one another with reference to the materials, instruments and products of labour."

What constitutes and distinguishes classes, therefore, is not primarily differences in income, mentality or habits, as is vulgarly supposed, but the places they occupy in social production and the relations in which they stand to the means of production. This is what determines their differences in income, habits, mentality, and so on.

"The fundamental feature that distinguishes classes," Lenin explained in an article on *Vulgar Socialism and Narodism*, "is the place they occupy in social production and, consequently, the relation in which they stand to the means of production."

In *A Great Beginning* Lenin proposed the following more exhaustive definition of classes:

"Classes are large groups of people which differ from each other by the place they occupy in a historically definite system of social production, by their relation (in most cases fixed and formulated in laws) to the means of production, by their role in the social organisation of labour, and, consequently, by the dimensions of the social wealth that they obtain and their method of acquiring their share of it. Classes are groups of people one of which may appropriate the labour of another, owing to the different places they occupy in the definite system of social economy."

With classes there arise class antagonisms and class struggles.

Classes are antagonistic when the places they occupy in the system of social production are such that one class obtains and augments its share of social wealth only at the expense of another. Thus the relations between exploiters and exploited are inevitably antagonistic. And so are the relations between one exploiting class and another when their methods of exploitation come into conflict, that is, when the extraction of surplus labour by the one gets in the way of the extraction of surplus labour by the other. Thus the relations between rising bourgeoisie and feudal lords, for example, were antagonistic, since the one could maintain and the other develop its method of exploitation only at the expense of the other. Again, in nineteenth century England there was a certain antagonism between the industrial capitalists and the landowners.

"These warring classes," wrote Engels in *Socialism, Utopian and Scientific* (chap. 1), "are always the product of the conditions of production and exchange, in a word, of the economic conditions of their time."

Society based on exploitation is inevitably divided into antagonistic classes. Such a society is torn by class conflicts—always between exploiters and exploited, and sometimes between rival exploiters.

For this reason, as *The Communist Manifesto* began by stating: "the history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles."

These class struggles are rooted in conflicts of material interest between the different classes—conflicting economic

interests arising from the different places occupied by different classes in social production, their different relations to the means of production, and their different methods of obtaining and augmenting their share of social wealth.

Of course, not all class relations are antagonistic. If more than one method of exploitation is used to extract surplus labour, that means that society is founded on more than one form of property and has a complex class structure containing more than one exploiting class and more than one exploited class. In that case, there is no basic antagonism between the different classes of the exploited. On the contrary, these classes are potential allies against the exploiters—even though differences in their habits and mentality and aims, arising from differences in their relations to the means of production, may prevent them acting together and may sometimes be used by the exploiters to set one class against the other. Thus, for example, in a country with capitalist industry and peasant agriculture, the relations between the urban working class and the exploited peasantry are not antagonistic.

Again, in the socialist society of the U.S.S.R. there still remain today two distinct classes, the Soviet workers and peasants—though the distinction between them is becoming blurred. Like all class distinctions, this one is rooted in the different places the classes occupy in social production. The Soviet workers are engaged in state enterprises socially owned by the whole society in the person of the socialist state; the collective farm peasants are engaged in group, co-operative enterprises—collective farms. The class distinction is based on the distinction between public and group property. But neither class exploits the other, neither acquires and augments its share of social wealth at the expense of the other, and so there is no antagonism between them.

Social-Economic Formations

We have seen that the mode of production involves two factors—the forces of production, consisting of instruments of production and people with production experience and skill, and the relations of production. The latter in their totality

constitute the economic structure of society. Different economic structures represent so many economic formations which have come into being and then been superseded in the history of mankind. Economic structures are not bestowed on man in society ready-made by Providence, tailored to last him for ever, but evolve as men change their relationship with nature in production and so change their relationships with one another. "My standpoint," wrote Marx in the Preface to the first German edition of *Capital*, views "the economic formation of society as a process of natural history."

What constitutes difference of economic formation, and how are different types of social-economic formation to be classified?

Differences of economic formation are differences of production relations, and different types of social-economic formation are defined in terms of different kinds of production relations. People always depend for their livelihood on certain definite means of production. The relationships which people set up with one another which determine who performs productive labour, who owns means of production, and who has what claim on the product, are the production relations in terms of which the differences of social-economic formation which occur in the course of history are defined.

In classifying different types of historically constituted social-economic formation, there is a fundamental distinction, in the first place, between those with social ownership of means of production and those with private ownership, or private property.

With their first emergence from the animal world people were associated in small groups in which all the able-bodied contributed to production, the means of production were held in common, and the product was shared out amongst the group, all of whom had an equal claim on it. The evidence for this consists of inferences from what we know about surviving primitive peoples, together with the consideration that very primitive people could not well have lived in any other way. This type of economy has been called "primitive communism". There is very little doubt that such was the economy of men

for a very long time—more controversial are secondary questions, about kinship relations, social customs and beliefs, and so on.

Modern socialism, once more, presents an economic formation in which means of production are socially owned. The great difference between this and primitive communism is due to the fact that the instruments of production are of a very powerful and advanced kind, and production is on a very large scale. People are no longer members of clans, bound together and to the land, their principal means of production, by close communal ties. Land and means of production are no longer parcelled out amongst small communes, each of which is thereby subordinate to its means of production; means of production are socially owned on a grand scale and the whole of production is planned for the benefit of society as a whole. As production approaches the point of absolute abundance, this economic formation is carried from the stage when the claim on the product is determined by labour performed to the stage when it is determined simply by need.

In some regions the primitive communist way of life was eventually disturbed by improvements of techniques leading to division of labour, the production of a surplus, commodity exchange, and the formation of private property. These events took place in the distant past, they were never recorded, and so we today can draw only more or less probable inferences as to where they took place and the exact course they followed. What they quite evidently led to, and that only after a very long process, was economic formations in which society was divided into classes and man was exploited by man. But the precise character of the production relations of early class-divided societies is a matter of somewhat dubious inference. There are few written records—in many cases, none at all. And while archaeologists can dig up relics of productive forces, production relations do not leave such material relics. The most that can be done is to draw inferences from variations in the size and equipment of houses, grave furniture, and so on.

The fundamental criterion distinguishing the different economic formations of class-divided society is the method

of exploitation, or the method of extracting surplus labour from the producers and claiming the product of that labour. The definition of the method of exploitation at the same time defines the property and class relations of society.

When production is mainly agricultural, as was the case with all societies until a comparatively late period of history, the main method of exploitation must consist of extracting surplus labour from the agricultural producers. The main means of production is land, and to understand the method of exploitation it is therefore necessary to know how the primary producers worked the land and how they were related to it.

It would appear that in the early class-divided societies—and these, it should be remembered, existed for a period of many thousands of years before written history begins with classical Greece and Rome—surplus labour was extracted from the primary producers in various ways, sometimes by forced labour, always by exacting some form of tribute. Tribute has been exacted by central rulers, often claiming to be gods and owing their power to the fact that they had a monopoly over rare metals and often managed the water supply and irrigation works; by royal conquerors or their appointed representatives or satraps, in kind or in taxes; or by local magnates.

Such tribute was originally imposed upon communities of producers amongst whom there still remained strong survivals of primitive communism. Describing the method of exploitation in India, characteristic of the "oriental" or "asiatic" model of production prevailing there prior to the British conquest, Marx wrote of "village communities built upon the common ownership of land" which were "ground down by taxation". The producers in these communes, engaged not only in agricultural but also in various forms of primitive industrial labour, were "not confronted by private landowners" but rather by "a state which stands over them as their landlord and simultaneously as their sovereign." (*Capital*, vol. III, in chapters 20, 23 and 47.)

Wherever commodity exchange became more developed,

and with it the power of money, the original commune or clan system, which survived within earlier modes of exploitation, was increasingly broken up. Land then became liable to be bought, sold and mortgaged. Communal holdings were expropriated, and land become private property with the inevitable appearance of large landholdings. Producers parted with surplus labour also as interest on debts, and while most were impoverished a few became rich and turned into exploiters themselves.

The peculiarity of slavery, as a distinct and ancient method of exploitation, is that the person of the slave is owned by the master, who also owns land and other means of production and sets the slave to work as he sees fit. Evidently, slaves were primarily obtained by capture. But where commodity exchange developed, they became commodities to be bought and sold, so that slaves represented an investment of money and a source of income; and furthermore, many people became enslaved for debt.

It is probable that slavery was a feature of the earliest class-divided society, so that the exploitation of slaves began as soon as exploitation began, and existed alongside the exploitation of non-slave agricultural producers as a source of additional wealth and power to a part of the owning classes. Thus there were temple slaves, household slaves, slaves engaged in working metals, and so on. But a specifically slave economic formation arises only when, with development of commodity exchange and private ownership of land, it has become profitable to buy slaves for use in extractive and other industries; or when a large part of the peasantry has become impoverished by debt or other exactions, and has been expropriated and replaced by slaves—in short, when slavery becomes the major or predominant method of extracting surplus labour, as was the case with the great slave estates of ancient Rome.

Incidentally, the purest slave system that ever existed was that of the plantations of the Southern States of America, which ended less than a century ago. This was a commodity-producing economy, depending on trade with industrial capitalist economies which presently overwhelmed it; and the

slaves were acquired for cash from the slave-traders who played so big a part in the primitive accumulation of capital. This illustrates the fact that slavery by itself does not suffice to define one single and unique social-economic formation, and is not peculiar to one particular stage of economic development. In fact, slavery has been a feature of many economic formations from very ancient times to very recently, just as wage-labour has also been. There is no economic formation of class-divided society which contains only one method of exploitation, and which is therefore of a "pure" type. Each formation that historically comes into existence must be defined as a specific historically constituted complex of different methods of exploitation, applied to specific technically-defined types of labour, with one method predominating.

The specific type of economic formation known as feudalism arises when land is owned by a hereditary nobility and when peasants, who possess their own instruments of production, have the use of land—to which they may be legally tied as serfs—on condition of paying dues in kind or in money or both to the nobility; and when likewise handicrafts and small manufactures exist in dependence on the nobility whose land they occupy, paying dues to them.

Feudalism can arise in a fairly obvious way from a system of slave estates by the replacement of slaves by serfs and of slave-owning landowners by feudal landowners. And there is no doubt that historically the feudal system in Europe did arise from the decline and wreck of the former Roman slave system, when enterprises based on slavery had either ceased to pay or had been broken up by invasions. There has perhaps not yet been enough investigation of what has been called the feudal economy in China and elsewhere to define it with exactitude or to know from what exactly it arose.

Be that as it may, it is certain that capitalism arose historically only from economic development within a feudal society. It arose when improvements in manufacture and agricultural techniques had created conditions in which the bulk of products could be produced as commodities; when landowners,

eager to get more money, had expropriated large numbers of agricultural producers and left them to their own devices without enslaving them (this happened in England, for example, first by expropriations by landowners turning their estates into sheep runs to sell wool to the wool merchants, and then by enclosures for the sake of developing capitalist methods of farming); and when in mercantile centres large sums of money, accumulated by looting less developed areas, piracy, slave trading, and so on, were available as capital in the hands of individuals.

With capitalism, the producer is expropriated from all means of production and can live only by selling his labour-power to the capitalist owner of means of production, who thus extracts his surplus labour in the form of surplus value, or "unpaid labour". The value of the commodities produced in a day's work is greater than that of the worker's own labour-power, which he sells to the capitalist; and this difference is the surplus value which the capitalist appropriates, and which he realises in cash and to his profit when he sells the goods produced.

The historical sequence of social-economic formations is a natural history or evolutionary process in this sense—that production relations are always adapted to given forces of production, so that those that arise in adaptation to more advanced forces of production represent a higher stage of development of the economic formation of society than those adapted to less advanced forces of production. The stage of development that a given society has attained is objectively decided by the level of the forces of production and by how far its economic structure permits people to extract the maximum powers from those forces of production.

Thus evidently, primitive communism is the first and lowest social-economic formation, and socialism the highest. Socialism is a higher, more developed formation than capitalism, capitalism than feudalism, feudalism than the other formations that succeeded primitive communism, and all of them than primitive communism. The ancient Greeks and Romans reached a more developed stage than their barbarian neigh-

bours, the Chinese or the Europeans of the Middle Ages than the Romans, Western capitalism than medieval feudalism. And now Soviet communism is rapidly reaching a more developed stage than Western capitalism.

In a famous passage of the Preface to *Critique of Political Economy*, Marx wrote: "In broad outlines, asiatic, ancient, feudal and modern bourgeois modes of production can be designated as progressive epochs in the economic formation of society. The bourgeois relations of production are the last antagonistic form of the social process of production . . . the productive forces developing in the womb of bourgeois society create the material conditions for the solution of that antagonism."

It would appear that the progress here referred to is that in which (1) commodity production has not yet reached the point where the communal ownership of land and sharing out of land amongst members of communes has been disrupted, and private ownership of land is not yet widely established (the "asiatic" epoch); (2) private ownership of land and other means of production is highly developed and a major part of commodity production is carried on by slave labour (the "ancient" epoch); (3) slaves cease to be widely used and their labour is replaced by that of serfs and others owing dues to feudal landowners (the "feudal" epoch); (4) the greater part of the social product is produced as commodities, and workers in major productive enterprises are completely expropriated from means of production and converted into wage-labourers selling their labour-power to capitalists (the "bourgeois" epoch).

Finally, in examining the typical corresponding economic formations that came into being in various regions, it also appears that as in the economic development the productive forces of primitive communism are surpassed, so society becomes emancipated from primitive production relations—and consequently also from the ideologies that correspond to them. The higher the stage of economic development, the more have the primitive communal relations binding the producers to the means of production been dissipated. These

remain strong in all early class-divided societies, and the principal economic agency responsible for their dissolution is commodity exchange. This grows with production itself, and is a strong force impoverishing the primary producers and leading to their expropriation from the land: slavery, wherever it is widely introduced, plays a big part here. As communal production relations among primary producers are dissipated, so also are clan ties and clan authority undermined, and the authority of a state power exerted over a territory takes their place. Industrial capitalism, which finally accomplishes the complete expropriation of workers from their means of production, is then the prelude to socialism and the foundation of fully developed communist society—for then the whole means of production can be taken into social ownership by the whole of society.

Chapter Four

THE FUNDAMENTAL LAW OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Development of the Forces of Production

We have defined the mode of production and the types of production relations—economic and class structures—through which production develops. This development of production is the basis of the entire development of society. We shall now consider the causes of this economic development, the laws which govern the transition from one economic formation to another, and the forces which effect the transition.

People develop their forces of production. They change their relations of production, and with these changes new classes come to the fore. Changes in relations of production are consequent upon development of the forces of production, being made in adaptation to new forces of production so as to make possible their full or fuller employment, and these changes are effected through class struggles and by the agency of definite classes—such is the fundamental law of social development in accordance with which people effect the historical development of one mode of production after another.

First we shall consider the development of the forces of production.

In the course of history, the instruments of production have been developed from crude stone tools up to modern machinery. Each technical invention has been dependent on previous ones and could not have been made had the earlier techniques not been already available. The history of technology thus follows a sequence determined by the objective properties of

the materials and forces in the physical, chemical and biological environment available for employment by man. This development of techniques was effected by people, who designed and used the instruments of production. Consequently, the development of the instruments of production was also a development of people—of their experience, skill, knowledge, and ability to make and handle the instruments of production.

This development of the forces of production, including the development of the experience, skills, knowledge and abilities of people themselves, is the root cause of the whole of social development.

From what does it arise?

It arises from men's constant striving to master nature. And this striving is not some divine gift but the natural consequence of the fundamental opposition or contradiction between men and their natural environment, which is present from the first moment when men began to fashion tools and to co-operate in their use—that is, from the birth of mankind.

"Man," wrote Marx in *Capital* (vol. I, chap. 7, sect. 1), "opposes himself to nature as one of her own forces, setting in motion arms and legs, head and hands, the natural forces of his body, in order to appropriate nature's productions in a form adapted to his own wants. By thus acting on the external world and changing it, he at the same time changes his own nature. He develops his slumbering powers and compels them to act in obedience to his will."

Men, seeking to satisfy their wants, manage to improve their technique, their tools and their skill—in other words, their productive forces. And it is only when new productive forces present them with new possibilities and so arouse in them the feeling of new needs, that men begin to feel the necessity of a change in production relations.

The development of productive forces is, however, far from being a steady, continuous process throughout the history of society. If every generation had always improved upon the productive forces inherited from the previous generation, history would have moved a great deal faster and a great deal more evenly than has in fact been the case. On the contrary,

it has frequently happened that, having once acquired certain techniques, people have made do with them for a very long time. And then their production relations have remained basically the same for a very long time, too. Again, acquirements have been regional. While some have forged ahead with new techniques, those living in some other region have remained stuck with old techniques.

Thus, for example, production remained at the level of the old stone age for hundreds of thousands of years, and all those generations continued to live the life of primitive communism. Some scarcely moved at all until colonisers arrived from outside. Again, in some regions methods of agriculture remained unchanged for thousands of years, and for all that time production relations remained virtually unchanged. But when, for whatever reasons, new productive forces are acquired, then a process begins resulting eventually in changes of production relations amongst those who have acquired those productive forces. New techniques are introduced within the existing production relations, but at a certain stage their employment leads to people changing their production relations.

Very rapid development of productive forces is a feature of capitalist society. But it was not the case in modern history that first capitalist relations of production were introduced and only after that did development of productive forces begin. On the contrary, this development began within the feudal system, and it was only afterwards that capitalist relations of production supplanted the feudal relations. A whole series of inventions during the middle ages (new applications of water power, the modern type of plough, new methods of navigation, the spinning-wheel, new mining methods, lathes, cast iron, etc.) provided the conditions for the development of capitalism.

In carrying on production, people necessarily enter into definite relations of production. And in the long run, they always bring these relations of production into correspondence with their productive forces.

"Social relations are closely bound up with productive

forces," wrote Marx in *The Poverty of Philosophy*. "In acquiring new productive forces men change their mode of production. . . . The hand-mill gives you society with the feudal lord; the steam-mill, society with the industrial capitalist."

Spontaneous or Unplanned Development

To understand the causes of this development of productive forces and of corresponding production relations it is necessary to premise that in the past people have not brought new productive forces into employment, nor set up new production relations, as a result of any plan or intention.

In developing new tools and techniques people have always been seeking some immediate advantage, but have been far from planning or intending the revolutionary social results which have in fact followed from such development.

For example, when manufacture first started, the manufacturers who started it had no plan of creating gigantic new productive forces; they were simply seeking their own immediate advantage. To carry on manufacture they began to hire wage-labour, in other words, to initiate capitalist relations of production. They did not do this because they had an ambitious and far-seeing plan for building capitalism; they did it because that turned out to be the way in which manufacture could best be carried on.

In this way the development of new productive forces—in our example, those brought into operation by manufacture—was never decided upon but happened spontaneously, without any plan, as a result of certain people seeking their own immediate advantage. And similarly, the development of these productive forces led to the institution of new relations of production—once more, spontaneously, by economic necessity, and without any plan. This is what Marx expressed by saying that the development of production relations happened "independent of men's will".

"In the social production which men carry on," he wrote in the Preface to *Critique of Political Economy*, "they enter into definite relations that are indispensable and independent of their will; these relations correspond to a definite stage

of development of their material forces of production."

The relations of production into which people enter in the course of their social production are "indispensable"—because they cannot carry on production without entering into definite relations of production; and also "independent of their will"—because they do not decide beforehand to institute certain definite relations of production, but enter into these relations independent of any such plan.

Hence, first the development of productive forces and then the change of production relations is caused by social economic activities which people perform because of the necessity of living—spontaneously, without any deliberate decision or plan, independent of their will. This is a feature of social development right up to the socialist revolution. Only with the victory of the socialist revolution does it happen that production relations are changed as a result of deliberate decision and that thereafter the development of production is also regulated by a plan.

Changes of Relations of Production

Changes of the relations of production depend on development of the forces of production. Such is the law of social development. For it is a requirement of all social production that the relations which people enter into in carrying on production must be suitable to the type of production they are carrying on. Hence, it is a general law of economic development that the relations of production must necessarily be adapted to the character of the forces of production.

As we have seen, the very nature of production as a contradictory relationship between men and nature implies a tendency for new techniques to be discovered from time to time. But as for production relations, on the other hand, once established they tend to remain fixed—the economic structure, the forms of property, the social system, is a conservative factor which resists change.

The invention and employment of new productive forces introduces, as is obvious, new division of labour and creates a greater quantity and variety of products. But this new

division of labour itself gives rise to new forms of property, through which the new division of labour is organised and which regulate the appropriation and distribution of the greatly increased product. The property relations and mode of exchange of economic activities and products which arose from and corresponded to the earlier productive forces no longer suffice for the organisation of a new division of labour and the distribution of its products.

For this reason, the relation between production relations and productive forces is a contradictory one. The same production relations which were well suited for the productive forces in use at one time are not well suited to new productive forces, and so come to hinder their development and to act as a fetter on it. When this happens, it is clear that instead of production relations being in conformity with productive forces there is an active contradiction between them. And because production relations tend to resist change, because there are always people whose material interests are bound up with certain production relations and who therefore resist any change, this contradiction issues in deep social conflicts.

For example, as we have just seen, the development of manufacture—and, we should add, the development also of new techniques in agriculture—required and led to the employment of wage-labour. Only with capitalist relations could the newly-developed forces of production be more fully employed. But the existing feudal relations, which tied the labourer to the land and to the service of his lord, were a barrier to the development of the new productive forces. Hence these relations, within which production had once flourished, now began to act as a fetter. A contradiction arose between the old production relations and new productive forces.

So long as production relations are in conformity with productive forces, they remain relatively unchanged. And in some regions it has come about that certain production relations, once established, have proved so extraordinarily conservative that no impulse to improve productive forces has arisen within them—or if it did arise, it was strangled at

birth, and the employment of new techniques was discouraged and put down. But wherever any people do develop new productive forces, this development eventually reaches a point where it is hindered by the existing relations of production. And it is at that point that a change in the relations of production becomes necessary, and is carried into effect.

The development of productive forces is a law of human history, which asserts itself despite all pauses and setbacks. Anything which opposes this irresistible development is bound, sooner or later, to be swept away. So when relations of production begin to hinder the use of new productive forces, the time is approaching when the social system based on them will fall.

What has taken place, up to the appearance of the capitalist economic formation, is that whenever people have developed new forces of production they have, in doing so, begun to enter into new relations of production; and then those new production relations have supplanted former ones and been consolidated into a new social-economic formation.

Thus the communal system of primitive communism corresponded to a very primitive level of development of production. When the cultivation of crops and domestication of animals appeared, the beginnings of private property and commodity exchange arose, and the old communal relations began to be changed. A new kind of community of separate households emerged, with "some more equal than others". When the use of metals was acquired, then society became further and more deeply divided.

The people who first settled in river valleys and began irrigation works could not organise those works except by means of some form of property in which they were centrally controlled by a single authority. A new type of property was eventually superimposed upon the old property of the members of the communes. A new type of social-economic formation arose and superseded the old, which was incapable of developing the new type of production. The land was said to belong to the gods, and those who supervised production and got the main share of the product were called gods or servants of gods: this

was evidently an imaginative way of describing an economic arrangement, a form of property and of the exploitation of man by man, which had come into being because it was capable of organising production in a way older forms of property were not.

Those peoples who acquired the use of iron acquired thereby many advantages over those who had not done so. They were able to cultivate new lands, and to set up small industries; commodity exchange and the use of money increased and brought to the fore new landed and financial interests which broke and displaced former aristocracies. Where, as in Greece and Rome, a social-economic formation with slavery as the dominant mode of exploitation arose, this took place because large-scale agricultural enterprises, extractive industries and building could more effectively be carried on by slave labour than by clansmen paying tribute. The former labourers and proprietors were ruined, and the old production relations were replaced by the specific economic formation of the slave system of "classical" times.

Engels remarked (in part II, chap. 4, of *Anti-Dühring*) that this development of slavery thoroughly undermined the remnants of primitive communal relations which had survived throughout all former systems. "It was slavery," he wrote, "that first made possible the division of labour between agriculture and industry on a considerable scale. . . . We should never forget that our whole economic, political and intellectual development has as its presupposition a state of things in which slavery was as necessary as it was universally recognised. In this sense we may say: Without the slavery of antiquity, no modern socialism."—In China and other countries of the East, the ancient economic development of which is still imperfectly understood, communal relations among producers seem to have survived in a way that inhibited any internal development towards a capitalist mode of production, and to have proved a strongly conservative force until very recently when, the power of former landowners having been abolished, they could be transformed into the socialist relations of the people's commune.

So long as slavery remained in force in Europe as the main method of exploiting labour, improvements in production techniques—especially those making use of natural forces other than human muscle-power—were inhibited. But when, with invasions and the weakening of the central slave-owning power, the supply of slaves began to dry up, improvements associated with the fuller use of water power, improved harness for draught animals, improved ploughs, and so on, began to be effected. Slavery was never abolished at a single stroke; slave-labour remained alongside free labour. But the improved techniques were not easily workable by slave labour, and could be used to advantage within the feudal rather than the old slave relations. Feudal methods of exploitation then came to replace slavery.

Later still, feudalism in its turn came to hinder the development of the productive forces. Feudal ownership, feudal dues and restrictions on trade hampered the development of agriculture and manufacture employing new inventions which demanded a source of wage-labour. Feudalism then gave way to capitalism and capitalist relations of production.

The capitalist relations brought about a development of productive forces on a scale and at a speed unknown before. This was because scientific research now came to be a powerful force of production, and the drive for profit and accumulation of capital led the capitalist owners continually to develop new techniques. But the fuller use and development of the forces of production is now being blocked by capitalism.

The fundamental feature of the increase of the forces of production brought about within capitalism is the socialisation of labour. Petty, individual production has been replaced by the power of social labour, in which men co-operate together in great productive enterprises using power-driven machinery. Social labour is capable of immense achievements, miracles of construction for the welfare of all mankind. But it is fettered by the capitalist production relations, which make the product the property of the capitalists and compel social production to serve private profit.

Social production is in contradiction with private capitalist

appropriation, and must needs break the fetter of the capitalist production relations. When social ownership and social appropriation is established to match social production, not only are all the brakes taken off technical advance, but the great productive forces of social labour are set free—people are their own masters and are working for themselves.

The general picture which emerges of social development from one formation of production relations to another is, then, as follows.

First, relations of production arise in conformity with the development of the productive forces. But a time comes when further development of new productive forces is hindered by old relations of production. From forms of development of the social forces of production, these relations turn into their fetters. Then comes a period of revolutionary change, when one type of production relations is replaced by another.

How, then, by what means, by what forces, are such changes brought about?

Class Struggle as the Motive Force of Social Change

Society develops through a series of stages, in each of which a definite type of property predominates. This development is far from being a smooth, gradual process of evolution, working itself out through a series of imperceptible changes and adjustments, without conflict. On the contrary, property relations are changed through a series of revolutions. And after the first establishment of private property, these are brought about by people pursuing class interests and by the struggle of one class against another.

As we have seen, whenever people develop new forces of production they begin to enter into new relations of production. Forms of property in means of production come into existence appropriate to the organisation of those forces of production. A method of exploitation, or of extraction of surplus labour from the producers, goes with those forms of property. And so, with the development of new forces of production, new classes arise, and new class divisions and antagonisms within society.

These antagonisms include, first of all, the antagonism between exploiters and exploited. The exploiters, as a class, seek all means to consolidate their property, to extract more surplus labour and to increase their wealth. Unless utterly beaten down and enslaved, the exploited resist this, and take whatever action they can to keep more of their labour for themselves. Moreover, those exploited classes which retain forms of property of their own—such as members of communes who have land in common or, later, serfs and free peasants—together with small independent producers or petty traders, seek to hang on to their property, to enlarge it if they can, and to resist encroachments from big exploiting property interests.

Thus there have been, for example, many peasant risings, slave revolts, and so on, aimed at getting free from at least some exactions and at winning security of tenure or resettlement on the land. Again, small men have resisted impoverishment and expropriation—sometimes for a time successfully, as with the big movements in ancient Greece and Rome which gained such demands as cancellation of debts.

Further, throughout history great exploiting classes have established empires. They have by armed force extended their sway over wide territories, subjecting the economically less developed people there to exploitation—exacting tribute, catching slaves, looting their resources. Modern imperialism, in essence the division of the world between great monopoly capitalist interests for purposes of exporting capital and obtaining raw materials and markets for metropolitan industries, is but the modern form of an imperialism which has thousands of years of history. Imperial conquest has always encountered the resistance of the conquered. And time and time again, this resistance has eventually contributed to the downfall of exploiting classes. When in the distant past great exploiting classes, with their empires, have been overthrown by barbarian invasions, these invasions were seldom simply invasions by nomads or other migrating peoples who were only after land or plunder. They were invasions by people who had the choice of either submitting to exploitation by ancient imperial-

ists, or else attacking and overthrowing their empires. Modern imperialism does not face any invasion by "barbarians"—but the modern liberation movement of colonial peoples is none the less fatal to it.

Secondly, there are antagonisms between exploiting classes. In particular, the exploiting class whose property and method of exploitation is associated with the organisation of new and improved forces of production always comes into antagonism against older exploiting classes. Consolidating their property, struggling by all means, including armed force, to increase their wealth by extending their own method of exploitation, they come into collision with the older exploiters. And it is when circumstances favour them—as they generally do, because new forces of production are more powerful than old —that the older forms of property are overwhelmed, and the older exploiting classes are either eliminated altogether, by being ruined or perhaps killed off, or forced into a merely subsidiary place in the new economy.

With the rise of private property and exploitation, and the division of society into antagonistic classes, social life becomes a scene of violence, cruelty and war. However dark his superstitions and miserable his condition, there is no doubt that primitive man was comparatively peaceable. His life may have been, as Thomas Hobbes put it, "nasty, brutish and short", but it was not filled with war and civil strife. But the material interests of exploiting classes drive them into oppression and violence—into imposing by force their exaction of surplus labour, violent struggle against other classes, and aggressive wars. The specific character and aims of war depend on the method of obtaining wealth which motivates the war, whether to conquer new lands, catch slaves, secure new markets and raw materials, or find outlets for investment of capital.

Thus it has been through class struggles and wars that revolutionary social changes have been effected.

The waging of class struggles has always, as *The Communist Manifesto* put it, "ended, either in a revolutionary reconstitution of society at large, or in the common ruin of the contending classes". This "common ruin" seems often to have overtaken

social organisms in earlier times, consummated often by invasions by barbarians. It was, by the way, this frequent phenomenon in history which apparently led Professor Arnold Toynbee, for example, to formulate a theory about the law of the rise and inevitable fall of all civilisations: he made a sweeping generalisation from numerous but insufficiently analysed data. But it is also possible that this could be the fate of our own civilisation, if antagonisms between old and new social formations end in nuclear warfare.

Every economic formation came into existence, overcame an older one and was consolidated under the lead of a definite class—namely, the class whose material interests were served by the mode of disposing of surplus labour peculiar to that formation. And since this new class appears as the opponent of the older exploiting class and of the existing system of exploitation and oppression, "the class making a revolution appears from the very start . . . as the representative of the whole of society" (Marx and Engels, *The German Ideology*, part I). It is thus able to mobilise the support of other classes opposed to its own main enemy, and this contributes to its victory. Afterwards, when a new method of exploitation becomes dominant in society, antagonisms break out afresh.

The bourgeoisie, in its battle against feudalism, was in this way able to mobilise the greater part of society against its feudal enemy. But when capitalism was under way, new class antagonisms broke out.

It is a peculiarity of capitalism that it simplifies class contradictions by bringing to the fore the one great antagonism between capitalist class and working class. The exploiting class is now faced with no rival exploiting class but only with the class of the exploited. But this is now an exploited class organised and educated by the very socialisation of labour which capitalism itself brings into existence. It is an exploited class for the first time able itself to take over leadership of the whole of society, not looking backwards to some older form of petty property but forward to social ownership of the means of production.

At the same time, capitalism greatly sharpens *all* class

contradictions. The first socialist revolution did not in fact take place where capitalism was already most highly developed. It took place in Russia, where the capitalist class was still comparatively weak but where all class contradictions had reached their sharpest expression—between workers and capitalists, peasants and landowners, national minorities and their oppressors. The Russian working class was able to take the lead of all the exploited, in order to overthrow all the exploiters and finally end the exploitation of man by man.

Individuals and Classes

The theory of class struggle enables us to understand the role of prominent individuals in history.

No class plays a role in history without leaders, so that the activities of public men play an essential part in getting things done—whether the leaders are heading revolutionary movements, consolidating gains, merely keeping things going, or defending lost causes. The authority and power of the historical personage, of the man whose actions seem, unlike those of historically anonymous people, to shape society for good or ill and to make history, is derived from a class. And unless he enjoys the support of a class whose interests and tendencies he represents, he is impotent and can exert no decisive influence.

Hence there arise in different historical periods prominent men of different types, varying with the task their class calls on them to fulfill. The barbarian conqueror, the tyrant, the prudent or vicious emperor, the good or bad king, the wily politician, the fiery agitator, the scientific socialist—all are products of the social conditions in which they play their parts. For the same reason, the type of personality that comes to the top is the one suited to the job in hand, while others, perhaps more gifted in other ways, remain obscure. Similarly, it is natural that in times of revolutionary change great and dynamic personalities come to the fore, while at other times only mediocrities show their faces.

Historical development is not determined by the personal decisions of public men, but by the movement of classes. The

prominent men of a class affect its fortunes by the wisdom or otherwise of their actions, but they do not make or break a class. Moreover, where a leader is evidently failing, he tends to be deposed and someone more able to be substituted.

It is the same with cultural and intellectual leaders. Those who make their mark are those whose work reflects the needs of their times.

"When it is a question of investigating the driving powers which lie behind the motives of men who act in history," wrote Engels in *Ludwig Feuerbach* (chap. 4), "it is not a question so much of the motives of single individuals, however eminent, as of those motives which set in motion great masses, whole peoples, and again whole classes. To ascertain the driving causes which are reflected as conscious motives in the minds of acting masses and their leaders . . . is the only path which can put us on the track of the laws holding sway both in history as a whole and at particular periods in particular lands."

Those historians who fail to grasp the determining role of economic development and the class struggle in history find themselves in difficulties when trying to explain historical events—and even in deciding which events are worthy of being classed as "historical". If it is a matter of the personalities and motives of individuals accounting for what happens, then the historian is faced with the practical impossibility of finding sufficient evidence to know their personalities and their motives with any degree of certainty. Indeed, as it is usually hard enough to know the personal motives of one's own acquaintances, and even sometimes of oneself, it is evident that still less can be ascertained about individuals long dead, for whose characters only obviously biased testimonials are available. The historian has to fill in his lack of knowledge from his own bias and imagination: the innocent Miss Catherine Morland in *Northanger Abbey* can be excused for saying of history: "I often think it odd that it should be so dull, for a great deal of it must be invention."

But historians have only themselves to thank if they are thus driven into scepticism about the discovery of historical

causes, and into the conclusion that what is actually "important" in history can be decided only by the subjective interest of the historian himself. While the details of individual motives must necessarily remain hidden, the social causes of historical development are open to historical knowledge; and what is "important" is objectively decided by its bearing on the development of the mode of production.

The State and Revolution

How has it been possible, in societies divided into exploiters and exploited, for an exploiting minority to preserve its domination over the majority, and for the social organism not to fall in pieces under stress of class struggle?

It has been possible only because the minority possessed and had control over a special organisation for coercing the rest of society and at the same time preserving the unity of society. That organisation is the state.

The state is not an organisation of the whole of society, but a special organisation within society, armed with power to repress and coerce. Whatever the form of the state—whether it be an autocracy, a military dictatorship, a democracy, etc. —its most essential components are the means to exercise compulsion over the members of society. Such compulsion is exercised by means of special bodies of armed men—soldiers, police and so on. It is enforced by physical means—by the possession of arms; by the possession of strong buildings, prisons, with locks and bars; by the possession of instruments to inflict pain and death. The state must also include a machinery of administration, a corps of state officials. It also develops a legal system, an authority for making laws and judges to interpret and administer them. And it also develops means not only of coercing men physically, but mentally, by various types of ideological and propaganda agencies.

Such a special organisation became necessary only when society was divided into antagonistic classes. From that time onwards, the state became necessary as a special power to prevent the social antagonisms from disrupting and destroying society.

"The state has not existed from all eternity," wrote Engels in *The Origin of the Family, the State and Private Property* (chap. 9). "At a definite stage of economic development, which involved the cleavage of society into classes, the state became a necessity because of this cleavage."

"As the state arose from the need to keep class antagonisms in check, but also in the thick of the fight between classes," he continued, "it is normally the state of the most powerful, economically ruling class, which by its means becomes also the politically ruling class, and so acquires new means of holding down and exploiting the oppressed class."

The state, wrote Lenin the *The State and Revolution* (chap. 1), is "an organ of class rule, an organ for the repression of one class by another".

At each stage of development, as we have seen, a particular type of production relations becomes predominant in the social economy, and the corresponding class assumes the dominant place in social production. It can gain and maintain that place only in so far as it can enforce its own interests upon the rest of society. And it can do that only in so far as it can gain and maintain control over the state. In every epoch, therefore, so long as society is divided into antagonistic classes, a particular class holds the state power and thereby establishes itself as the ruling class. In a slave society it is the slave-owners, in feudal society the feudal lords, in capitalist society the capitalists, and when capitalism is overthrown the working class becomes the ruling class.

When the working class becomes the ruling class, then there is no longer the rule of the minority of the exploiters over the majority of the exploited, but the rule of the majority. In this, working-class power differs from all previous state power. Previous state power has, as Marx expressed it in *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* (chap. 7) perfected an "enormous bureaucratic and military organisation". The task of the working class is to smash it. When eventually all exploitation is eliminated, the coercive powers of the state will no longer be needed and the state itself will finally disappear.

In the history of class struggles every ruling exploiting class

has always defended to the last the property relations on which depended its wealth and influence and, indeed, its very existence as a class. It has done so by its control over the state. And so all classes which stand in antagonism to the ruling class are inevitably driven into political action, if not to destroy the state power of the ruling class and wrest control of the state away from it, then at least to modify and influence that state power in their own interests.

"Every class struggle is a political struggle," wrote Marx and Engels in *The Communist Manifesto.* Just as, in the last analysis, every major political struggle is a struggle of classes, so the class struggle becomes a struggle to influence state, that is, political affairs and, in revolutionary periods, a struggle for state power.

Decisive revolutionary changes in the economic structure of society are necessitated, and the way is prepared for them, by an economic process which develops independently of men's will—by the growth of productive forces and the consequent incompatibility of old production relations with new productive forces. But such changes are actually carried through by political actions, very often taking the form of war. For whatever are the issues raised, and whatever forms the struggle takes, these are in the last analysis the ways in which men become conscious of the economic and class conflicts and fight them out.

Social revolution is, therefore, the transfer of state or political power from one class to another class. "The question of power is the fundamental question of every revolution," wrote Lenin, in an article *On Slogans.*

Revolution means the overthrow of a ruling class which defends existing relations of production, and the conquest of state power by a class which is interested in establishing new relations of production.

Every revolution, therefore, makes forcible inroads into existing property relations, and destroys one form of property in favour of another form of property.

"The abolition of existing property relations is not at all a distinctive feature of communism," said *The Communist*

Manifesto. "All property relations in the past have continually been subject to historical change consequent upon the change in historical conditions. The French Revolution, for example, abolished feudal property in favour of bourgeois property. The distinguishing feature of communism is not the abolition of property generally, but the abolition of bourgeois property."

Progress and Exploitation

The great revolutionary changes of the past have seen the replacement of one exploiting class by another exploiting class, and thus the replacement of one method of exploitation by another method of exploitation.

In this process, the revolutionary energy of the exploited masses in their struggle against the exploiters has helped to destroy one exploiting class—in order to replace it by another exploiting class. Their struggle has served to break up the old system and to replace it by a new and higher system, but still a system of class exploitation.

Thus the revolts of slaves against slaveowners helped to break up the slave system—but to replace it by the feudal system. And the revolts of serfs against their lords helped to break up the feudal system—but to replace it by the capitalist system.

The whole of human progress is rooted in the increasing mastery of men over nature, in the increase of the social forces of production. In advancing their mastery over nature, men not only obtain their material needs, but enlarge their ideas, perfect their knowledge, develop their various capacities.

But yet this progress has borne a contradictory character. As man has mastered nature, so has man oppressed and exploited man. The benefits of progress belonged at one pole of society, the toil and sweat at the other. Each new stage of advance brought only new methods of exploitation; and with each step, more people were exploited.

"Since civilisation is founded on the exploitation of one class by another class," wrote Engels in *The Origin of the Family etc.* (chap. 9), "its whole development proceeds in a constant contradiction. Every step forward in production is at the same

time a step backwards in the position of the oppressed class—that is, of the great majority. Whatever benefits some necessarily injures others; every fresh emancipation of one class is necessarily a new oppression for another class."

Thus every step of progress has been made at the expense of the working people. The great advances of "classical" civilisation brought slavery in their train, and could only be carried through by means of slavery. The birth and growth of modern industry involved the wholesale ruin of small producers, the expropriation of masses of peasants from the land, the plunder of colonies, enormous increase of exploitation.

The growth of modern industry, however, has increased the powers of production to an extent unknown before. The power now exists, and for the first time, to produce plenty for everyone, without anyone wearing himself out with manual labour. In the past the forces of production were so limited that it was impossible to create conditions of leisure for any but a privileged minority of society. As Christ is reported to have said: "The poor ye have always with you." But this is no longer necessary today.

For just this reason, it is only now that the working people have arrived at a position when they themselves can rule and can take over the general management and direction of society. The slaves and serfs in the past could revolt time and again against their rulers, but were not themselves capable of taking command over production. They always had to look to someone else to manage social affairs. They always looked for a saviour, appealing to kings and other unlikely people to bring them justice. For the very character of the productive system meant that they were necessarily engrossed in manual labour, and so had to look to some privileged and educated minority to carry out the work of government.

We saw earlier that the division of society into exploiting and exploited classes was a result of the division of labour. And the division into rulers and ruled was a further consequence. With the development of production, a number of functions concerned with safeguarding the general interests of the community necessarily became the province of a special

group within the community.

"This independence of social functions in relation to society increased with time," wrote Engels in *Anti-Dühring* (part II, chap. 4), "until it developed into domination over society." Consequently, the majority of the people were relegated to the position where they were wholly occupied with toil, and the general functions of social management were assumed by a master class.

"So long as the working population was so much occupied in their necessary labour that they had no time left for looking after the common affairs of society—the direction of labour, affairs of state, legal matters, art, science, etc.—so long was it necessary that there should exist a special class, freed from actual labour, to manage these affairs." And then this class "never failed to impose a greater and greater burden of labour, for their own advantage, on the working masses.

"Only the immense increase of the productive forces attained through large-scale industry makes it possible to limit the labour time of each individual to such an extent that all have enough free time to take part in the general—both theoretical and practical—affairs of society. It is only now, therefore, that any ruling and exploiting class has become superfluous."

It is not the case, then, that throughout history all ruling classes have been parasites upon the body of society. They have performed a necessary social function. But as production has advanced, a larger part of the ruling classes has become parasitical, until now they perform no necessary function whatever.

By the beginning of the present century capitalism had developed to the stage of imperialism, when a few giant monopolies divided up the entire world among themselves. All the peoples were subject to them. There was an enormous accession of wealth and power into a few hands. Never before was the contrast between the wealth and power of the few and the poverty and subjection of the many so glaring, nor had it existed on such a world scale. But this was also the time for the people themselves to take over. The epoch of

imperialism is the epoch of socialist revolution—a revolution of an altogether new kind, which abolishes all exploitation and lays the foundations of a society without class antagonisms.

By creating the socialised production of modern large-scale industry, capitalism has created conditions in which for the first time there exists the possibility of securing for all members of society not only continually improving material standards but also the completely unrestricted development of all their faculties. And it has created in the working class an exploited class which, by its very position as the product of large-scale industry, is fully capable of taking over the management of society. The very advance of industry creates the conditions in which the working class not only grows in numbers and organisation, but trains itself for the task of taking command of production.

Thus "the history of class struggles forms a series of evolutions in which, nowadays, a stage has been reached where the exploited and oppressed class—the proletariat—cannot attain its emancipation from the sway of the exploiting and ruling class—the bourgeoisie—without, at the same time, and once and for all, emancipating society at large from all exploitation, oppression, class distinction and class struggles" (Engels, Preface to the 1888 English edition of *The Communist Manifesto*).

The Socialist Revolution

The principal conclusion of the scientific investigation of social development is, then, that of the historical necessity of the socialist revolution. And the materialist conception of history reveals on what forces socialism must rely, and how its victory can be won.

The socialist revolution is different in kind from every previous revolutionary change in human society.

In every revolution the economic structure of society is transformed. Every previous transformation has meant the birth and consolidation of a new system of exploitation. The socialist revolution, on the other hand, once and for all ends all exploitation of man by man.

In every revolution a new class comes to power, as ruling

class. In every previous revolution power was transferred into the hands of an exploiting class, a tiny minority of society. In the socialist revolution, on the other hand, power passes into the hands of the working class, at the head of all the working people—that is, into the hands of the vast majority. And this power is used, not to uphold the privileges of an exploiting class, but to destroy all such privileges and to end all class antagonisms.

Every revolution, since class society began, has been an act of liberation, inasmuch as it has achieved the emancipation of society from some form of class oppression. To this extent, every revolution has had a popular character. But in every previous revolution one form of oppression has been thrown off only to be replaced by another. The energy of the masses has been devoted to destroying the oppression of the old system. But the new system which replaced the old was built under the direction of new exploiters, who invariably made it their business to impose new forms of oppression on the people. In the socialist revolution, on the other hand, the people not only destroy the old system, they are themselves the builders of the new.

The condition of the transition from capitalism to socialism is the conquest of power by the working class—in other words, the ending of capitalist class rule and the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

In order that the working people may build socialism, in order that capitalist property may be abolished in favour of socialist property, the capitalist state must be replaced by a workers' socialist state.

Led by the working class, and with power in their own hands, the task of the working people is then to confiscate capitalist property in the principal means of production and to make them social property, suppress the resistance of the defeated capitalist class, organise planned production for the benefit of society as a whole, and finally abolish all exploitation of man by man.

Summing up the principal lessons of historical materialism, in a letter to J. Weydemeyer (March 5th, 1852), Marx wrote:

"No credit is due to me for discovering the existence of classes in modern society, nor yet the struggle between them. What I did new was to prove:

(1) that the existence of classes is only bound up with particular historical phases of the development of production;

(2) that the class struggle necessarily leads to the dictatorship of the proletariat;

(3) that this dictatorship itself only constitutes the transition to the abolition of all classes and to a classless society."

By "dictatorship" Marx evidently meant not the enforced rule of a dictator but rather, in a looser sense, "enforced rule" in general. Thus he wrote, too, of "the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie" enforced even within the forms of bourgeois democracy.

In the *Communist Manifesto* Marx and Engels wrote that "the first step in the revolution by the working class is to raise the proletariat to the position of ruling class, to win the battle of democracy". This battle would be won when representatives of the working class, at the head of the majority of the people, were in power—prepared to use it as forcefully as circumstances required, but always responsible to and controlled by the people's democratic mass organisations.

Latterly, West European Communist Parties have developed the concept of political "pluralism"—the proposal that the multi-party democratic process of government and opposition need not be interrupted by the transfer of power, which itself is not necessarily accomplished at one single blow.

What is stressed is the common interest and common democratic struggle of wide sections, including independent producers, traders and professional and scientific workers (the latter growing in numbers and importance in modern industrial societies), against the tight ring of dominant capitalist monopolies. The role of the industrial working class is seen as a leading and pace-making one, rather than that of its seizing the monopoly of political power.

Chapter Five

THE SOCIAL SUPERSTRUCTURE

The Ideas and Institutions of Society

The materialist conception of history, wrote Engels in the introduction to *Socialism, Utopian and Scientific*, "seeks the ultimate cause and great moving power of all important historical events in the economic development of society, in the changes in the mode of production and exchange, in the consequent division of society into distinct classes, and in the struggle of these classes against one another".

The fundamental law of social change is the law which governs the changes in the mode of production. The growth of the forces of production comes into conflict with the existing relations of production, leading to social revolution, to the fall of the old system of relations of production and the creation of a new system, to the overthrow of the old ruling class and the coming to power of a new class.

But "in considering such transformations," wrote Marx (Preface to *Critique of Political Economy*), "a distinction should always be made between the material transformations of the economic conditions of production, which can be determined with the precision of natural science, and the legal, political, religious, aesthetic and philosophic—in short, ideological—forms in which men become conscious of the conflict and fight it out. Just as our opinion of an individual is not based on what he thinks of himself, so can we not judge of such a period of transformation by its own consciousness; on the contrary, this consciousness must be explained rather from the contradictions of material life, from the existing conflict between the social forces of production and the relations of production."

For instance, at the close of the Middle Ages many people were prepared to die for the sake of the new Protestant religion, and fierce religious wars took place. But were they really fighting only for religion? Out of the religious wars arose new states and ultimately the establishment and consolidation of capitalist society. The urge to new ideas arose as a result of the formation of new relations of production and new classes, and people became conscious of conflicts based on economic contradictions as conflicts of new ideas and ideals against old ones.

Again, in Britain the new bourgeoisie at the time of the civil war fought for parliamentary institutions against the king. The civil war was fought as a war for parliament against royalty, and likewise as a war of puritans against churchmen. But the real content of the war was a fight of the bourgeoisie for power. The bourgeoisie controlled parliament, it was their institution, used by them in the fight against royalty. And when they did establish parliamentary government, it led to the creation of conditions for the unfettered development of manufacture and commerce.

In general, struggles about ideas and institutions are struggles through which people become conscious of their economic conflicts and fight them out—through which people on the one side defend and on the other side attack a given system of production relations. Such conflicts arise from contradictions between the social forces of production and the relations of production, which necessitate the development of new relations of production. It is through struggles about institutions and ideas that the conflicts are fought out and economic development effected.

Hence in considering the development of society we have not only to consider the basic development of the mode of production and the economic contradictions which in the last analysis determine that development. We have also to consider the way in which people, in their conscious social activity, "become conscious of conflict and fight it out". We have to consider, in short, the development of the ideas and institutions of society. For ideas and institutions play an active role in

social development, and it is through them that people carry on their social life and fight out the conflicts arising from it.

Social Being and Social Consciousness

According to idealist conceptions of history, as opposed to the materialist conception, the primary, determining factor in social development is to be found in the ideas and institutions of society. According to the idealists, men first develop certain ideas, then they create institutions corresponding to those ideas, and on that basis they carry on their economic life. In this way they place things exactly upside down. They put everything on its head. For instead of ideas and institutions developing on the basis of the material life of society, they say that material life develops on the basis of ideas and institutions.

"The whole previous view of history," said Engels in his speech at Marx's graveside, "was based on the conception that the ultimate causes of all historical changes are to be looked for in the changing ideas of human beings. . . . But the question was not asked as to whence the ideas come into men's minds."

Once this question is asked, he went on to explain, "the ideas of each historical period are most simply to be explained from the economic conditions of life, and from the social and political relations of the period which are in turn determined by these economic conditions."

Let us take an example.

It is often supposed that our forefathers overthrew the former feudal relations of subordination because the idea was born in their minds that men were equal. But why should this idea have suddenly become so influential? Why should the feudal relations of subordination, which for centuries had been held to be natural and just, suddenly begin to appear unnatural and unjust? These questions lead us from the sphere of ideas to the sphere of the conditions of material life. It was because material, economic conditions were changing that influential classes of people began to think in a new way, and to condemn institutions which up to then few had questioned. The existing feudal relations were no longer in keeping with

developing economic conditions. It was the development of economic activity and economic relations which created the forces which overthrew feudalism and laid the foundations of capitalism. And so the rise and spread of the idea of equality, as opposed to feudal inequality, followed upon and reflected the changes in material conditions of life.

Again, why should the idea of socialism have suddenly grown so influential once capitalism was under way? For centuries private property had been regarded as natural and just, and even as the necessary basis for any civilisation. But now, on the contrary, it began to appear unnecessary and oppressive. Once more, this new way of thinking, and the profound influence which socialist ideas began to exert, arose from new economic conditions. Under capitalism production was ceasing to be an individual matter and was becoming a social matter, and private property and private appropriation based on it were no longer in keeping with the new character of production.

In general, the rise of new ideas can never be regarded as a sufficient explanation of social changes, since the origin of ideas and the source of their social influence must always itself be explained. And this explanation is to be sought in the conditions of material life of society.

We shall find accordingly that corresponding to the different conditions of material life of society at different periods quite different ideas are current, and that the differences in the ideas of different classes in different periods—and likewise in the organisations and institutions which they support and set up —are always in the last analysis to be explained in terms of differences in conditions of material life.

"Does it require deep intuition," asked Marx and Engels in *The Communist Manifesto*, "to comprehend that man's ideas, views and conceptions, in a word, man's consciousness, changes with every change in the conditions of his material existence, in his social relations and in his social life?"

Summing up in the Preface to *Critique of Political Economy*, Marx wrote: "It is not the consciousness of men that deter-

mines their being, but, on the contrary, their social being that determines their consciousness."

Basis and Superstructure

In entering into relations of production and carrying on the economic activities of production and distribution people acquire definite interests and requirements of life, and become involved in conflicts arising from contradictory interests and requirements. All these are objective, material facts, which exist independently of what people may think about them. But people act consciously, have ideas about themselves and their aims in life, and in their conscious activity are organised within all kinds of institutions to serve all kinds of consciously conceived purposes.

In considering, therefore, the totality of social life we have to distinguish, on the one hand, the economic structure and economic development of society, which exists quite independently of what people think and may be determined with the precision of natural science; and, on the other hand, the ideas and conscious aims which arise in people's minds, and the institutions which are developed in accordance with those ideas and aims.

Hence in the study of society we should distinguish two distinct aspects, or interconnected strands of social development: on the one hand, the development of production relations and the conflicts arising from it; on the other hand, the whole intellectual, political and institutional development of society. On the one hand, there is the development of productive forces and of relations of production—the passage from one mode of production to another, of one social-economic formation to another. On the other hand, there is the development of religion, politics, art, philosophy, and of churches, states, parties, organisations and movements, and institutions of all kinds.

What is the relation between these two strands of development? Marx called it the relation of "basis" to "superstructure". At whatever stage of social evolution, people are engaged together in a mode of production; on the basis of

their production relations they work out ideas and associate in institutions, through which they represent to themselves their various interests and organise themselves in pursuit of their interests. These are said to develop as a superstructure upon the basis.

Thus people conceive and adopt religious, political, philosophical, moral or aesthetic ideas, and associate in institutions intended to embody them and propagate them. But they do not do this as it were in a vacuum. They are members of a society kept going by a certain mode of production, linked together by definite production relations. Such relations constitute the necessary basis for any social life; without such relations there can be no social life at all, and therefore no ideas or institutions. These relations, therefore, always constitute the basis on which people come together for any social purpose—the basis of all ideologies and institutions.

It follows that the ideas and institutions people adopt are always conditioned by their basic social relations, the relations of production. And the ideas which gain currency and the institutions through which people carry on their social life change with changes in the basic production relations. Aims, outlooks and beliefs, and likewise organisations and institutions, are created answering to the opportunities, needs and interests—including, of course, conflicting interests—which are inherent in the relations of production.

The distinction of "basis" and "superstructure", as two strands or levels of social development, is a distinction between those social processes which are the most obvious and open to investigation, and most immediately affect the members of society and strike the attention of historians, and those which are less immediately obvious and the details of which can only be uncovered by patient researches. What is most obvious is the ideas which people are proclaiming, the institutions they are organised in, the arguments they are engaging in, the speeches they are making and the epithets they are throwing at each other, and the political battles and wars they are fighting. Less obvious and, as it were, buried beneath all this but nevertheless sustaining it, are the economic relations and

economic processes of society. All the hurly-burly on the surface is conditioned by the underlying economic relationships, and serves a social function relative to their development.

In carrying on production and entering into production relations adapted to their forces of production, people require, first of all, what may be called institutions of management, and institutions of rule or state institutions. In so far as production is managed and society is ruled in the interests of a particular class, with management and rule serving the purpose of furthering a particular mode of exploitation, there also take shape forms of organised self-protection and resistance, or of revolutionary struggle, on the part of the non-ruling or exploited classes.

In feudal Europe, for instance, the manorial institutions and guilds, and in later capitalist societies the firms, limited liability companies, chambers of commerce, government departments, trade unions, and so on, are all institutional forms through which production is managed and basic economic conflicts carried on. These forms have their own development, and may vary greatly according to circumstances. For instance, in Britain today the light engineering industry is managed through the competition of numerous firms, the chemical industry is managed mainly by a single great monopoly, the railways are managed by a nationalised public authority. Similarly, forms of management of socialist industries may differ in different circumstances, according to the degree of centralisation or decentralisation of management, and so on. Further, just as the different forms of management and rule take shape historically and, by their form, influence the course of historical development, the same applies to the organisation of opposition and resistance. For instance, the peculiar historically-constituted structure of the British labour movement as compared with that of other Western European countries or of the U.S.A. has its effects in the contemporary social struggles in Britain.

Political and economic ideas, programmes and modes of thought take shape in connection with the functions of management and rule, either to promote or to resist the

particular form of management and rule. This is the most immediate or direct way in which institutional and ideological processes are connected with the basic economic structure. More remotely connected with the economic basis, and more directly related to the current institutional and political conflicts, there arise further ideological processes—religious, legal, philosophical, artistic, and so on—and the institutions associated with them.

It is worth noting, further, that the relation of "basis" and "superstructure" is essentially a dynamic and not a static relation. It is essentially a relation between inseparable aspects of the total social process, one of which develops on the basis of the other and serves a social function relative to the other—the ideological and institutional process on the basis of the economic structure, and serving a social function relative to economic development. Words can be misleading, especially when they make use of analogies, as do the words "basis" and "superstructure". Thus if you think of society as like a building, which has a "basis" or "foundation" buried in the earth, and a "superstructure" consisting of the various storeys erected on the foundation, that is misleading—for society, unlike a building, is continually changing and developing. Of what does society consist? It is not at all like a building, made of bricks or of a steel framework with slabs of concrete fixed on to it. Society consists of individual people engaged in social activities. The precondition of all their activities is production, in doing which they enter into social relations of production corresponding to their forces of production; they engage in all other social activities and enter into all other social relations on the basis of these relations of production. It is in this sense that the ideological and institutional development of society takes place on the basis of economic development. It is in this sense that the ideas which are current in any society at any time, the institutions, and likewise the ideological controversies and institutional rivalries, develop as a superstructure on the basis of the production relations.

The Methodology of Historical Explanation

We saw above that idealist conceptions of history, according to which ideas and institutions are the determining factors in social development, are defective because they fail to answer the question "whence the ideas come into men's minds".

On the other hand, the strand of economic development is self-explanatory. If you ask "why did certain economic relations arise?"—why did private property come into being, why did products become commodities, why did wage-labour come into being, and so on—then you do not have to look outside the sphere of economic development itself in order to find the explanation.

And then, having established the trend of economic development and the economic causes of it, it can be explained why, on the basis of that development, people grew dissatisfied with some ideas and developed other ones, rebelled against some institutions and set up other ones.

At the same time, the ideas and institutions which are developed on the basis of the economy are not simply a "reflex" or by-product—they are not simply passive consequences, but play an active role in relation to the economy. The economic development of society is the development of men's mastery over nature, to which end they develop their forces of production and enter into corresponding relations of production. Men's ideas and institutions are not irrelevant to this economic development. On the contrary, they play an indispensable role in it.

Thus, for example, from the economic processes of feudalism in Europe arose not only what we now term feudal ideas and institutions but also ideological controversies and institutional rivalries and upheavals which reflected the conflict between nascent capitalism and decaying feudalism; great ideological battles, political upheavals and religious wars took place—and all this played an indispensable part in the development of the feudal economy itself and in the economic change from feudalism to capitalism.

Similarly today, the basis of current ideologies and institutions, and of ideological and institutional conflicts, is economic.

But it is by employing ideologies and institutions, and by struggle in the sphere of ideology and institutions, that we today work out our economic destiny.

Hence in the history of society the economic process is always the basis for explaining the ideological and institutional process. But simultaneously the ideological and institutional process has a necessary function in relation to the economy, and explains how the economic process is actually carried on. For people cannot carry on their basic economic activity—they cannot live in society—without ideas whereby they represent to themselves their state of being and their purposes, and without institutions through which to realise their purposes. Yet how they represent themselves to themselves, and what purposes they set before themselves, must always depend upon their actual material circumstances—their economic activity, their relations of production, and the economic conflicts which thence arise.

What makes the economic process basic in social development is that the direction of the economic process is explicable in terms of economic laws. Once these laws are grasped, the whole of social development, the whole immensely complex interaction, becomes explicable—at least in general outline. But in terms of ideas and institutions alone, it cannot be explained—since ideas and institutions develop on the basis of the economy and have no independent development. "They have no history, no development," Marx and Engels declared in *The German Ideology*; "but men, developing their material production and their material intercourse, alter, along with this their real existence, their thinking and the products of their thinking."

So long, then, as ideas are regarded as being the determining factor in the development of society it is impossible to arrive at any scientific explanation of social development, that is, to explain it in terms of laws of development. For if the changing ideas and motives operating in social life are considered by themselves, as an independent sphere, then it is impossible to discover any universal laws that regulate them. In that case, as the Right Hon. H. A. L. Fisher stated in the

Preface to his *History of Europe*, "there can be only one safe rule for the historian: that he should recognise in the development of human destinies the play of the contingent and the unforeseen". In other words, the very possibility of a scientific treatment of social phenomena, of a science of society, is ruled out. It is only when we turn to the economic basis that we discover the universal law of social development—that people enter into production relations corresponding to their forces of production. Then the apparently fortuitous development of ideology, religion, politics and so on fits into a pattern and finds its explanation.

Marx "was the first to put sociology on a scientific basis," wrote Lenin, in *What the Friends of the People Are*, "by establishing the concept of the economic formation of society as the sum total of relations of production, and by establishing the fact that the development of such formations is a process of natural history."

Lenin went on to point out that in *Capital* Marx not only exhaustively analysed the capitalist economic structure and its laws of development, but also showed how corresponding to its development there arise definite modes of consciousness.

Having in the 1840's arrived at the general conception of historical materialism, Marx proceeded to apply, develop and verify it.

"He took one of the economic formations of society—the system of commodity production—and on the basis of a vast mass of data gave a most detailed analysis of the laws governing the functioning of this formation and its development.

"This analysis is strictly confined to the relations of production between the members of society. Without ever resorting to factors other than relations of production to explain the matter, Marx makes it possible to discern how the commodity organisation of society develops, how it becomes transformed into capitalist economy. . . .

"Such is the 'skeleton' of *Capital*. But the whole point of the matter is that Marx did not content himself with this skeleton . . . that while explaining the structure and development of the given formation of society exclusively in terms of

relations of production, he nevertheless everywhere and always went on to trace the superstructure corresponding to these relations of production, and clothed the skeleton in flesh and blood. . . .

"*Capital* . . . exhibited the whole capitalist social formation to the reader as a live thing—with its everyday aspects, with the actual social manifestation of the antagonisms of classes inherent in the relations of production, with the bourgeois political superstructure which preserves the domination of the capitalist class, with the bourgeois ideas of liberty, equality and so forth, with the bourgeois family relations."

Capital demonstrated, by the close scientific study of a particular economic formation, how the production relations develop, and how an entire superstructure of ideas and institutions develops on the basis of the production relations. Lenin therefore concluded that "since the appearance of *Capital* the materialist conception of history is no longer a hypothesis but a scientifically demonstrated proposition".

Historical materialism provides a methodology for historical explanation. Its truth is demonstrated by applying this methodology in concrete cases, and finding that it really does explain.

Historical Materialism versus "Vulgar Marxism"

From what has already been said it should be evident that the explanation of the development of the various elements of the superstructure in the actual history of any people is by no means a simple matter.

One species of oversimplified, mechanistic or "vulgar" explanation is that which seeks to explain the development of ideas and institutions directly from the productive forces. Thus, for example, it has been suggested that the rise of new ideologies in the ancient world was due to the development of new techniques, in employing which people came to change their ideas. Indeed, it is true that people conversant with iron-working do think differently from people who know only stone tools, just as people acquainted with nuclear bombs and electronics do think differently from people acquainted only

with bows and arrows and hand-labour. It is therefore suggested also that modern ideas and institutions arise directly from the modern forces of production—and so the present is called "the nuclear age" or "the age of science". But while it is true that there exists a certain correspondence between ideas and institutions on the one hand, and forces of production on the other, it is not true that the former can ever be explained directly from the latter. For employing their forces of production people enter into relations of production, and it is on the basis of the relations of production that they create their ideas and institutions. It is obvious enough, for instance, that today both capitalist and socialist countries employ the same production techniques—yet the course of the ideological development and the character of institutions differ greatly in the two cases, for in the one case there is a basis of capitalist relations of production and in the other case of socialist relations of production.

A more common type of vulgarisation is that which treats the development of the superstructure on its economic basis as an automatic process. But ideas and institutions are not the automatic products of a given economic and class structure, but products of people's conscious activities and struggles. To explain the superstructure, these activities and struggles must be studied concretely, in their actual complex development. Therefore it is certainly not Marxism, just as it is certainly not science, to attempt to conclude from the specification of certain economic conditions what the form of the superstructure arising on that basis is going to be, or to deduce every detailed characteristic of the superstructure from some corresponding feature of the basis. On the contrary, we need to study how the superstructure actually develops in each society and in each epoch, by investigating the facts about that society and that epoch.

Quite a few vulgarisers of Marxism—some calling themselves "Marxists", others serving out absurd travesties of Marxism in order to refute it—have represented Marxism as saying that every idea and institution in society is directly produced by and serves some immediate economic need. Of

such vulgarisers Engels reports (in a letter to C. Schmidt, August 5th, 1890) that Marx himself used to say: "All I know is that I am not a Marxist."

In the same letter Engels stressed that "our conception of history is above all a guide to study, not a lever of construction. . . . All history must be studied afresh, the conditions of existence of the different formations of society must be examined in detail, before the attempt is made to deduce from them the political, civil-legal, aesthetic, philosophic, religious, etc., notions corresponding to them".

Engels repeatedly stressed the need to examine concretely in every case the way in which particular ideas and institutions arise and take shape on the basis of given economic development, and the influence which they in turn exert upon the further development of society.

He expressly warned against misunderstandings arising from the manner in which he and Marx had occasionally presented the theory.

"Marx and I are ourselves partly to blame for the fact that younger writers sometimes lay more stress on the economic side than is due to it," he wrote to J. Bloch (September 21st, 1890). "We had to emphasise this main principle in opposition to our adversaries, who denied it, and we had not always the time, the place or the opportunity to allow the other elements involved in the interaction to come into their rights."

"According to the materialist conception of history," he continued, in the same letter, "the *ultimately* determining element in history is the production and reproduction of real life. More than that neither Marx nor I have ever asserted. Hence if someone twists that into saying that the economic element is the *only* determining one, he transforms that proposition into a meaningless, abstract, senseless phrase."

"Political, juridical, philosophical, religious, literary, artistic, etc., developments are based on economic development," Engels further wrote—in a letter to H. Starkenburg, January 25th, 1894. "But all these react upon one another and also upon the economic basis. It is not that the economic condition is the *cause* and *alone active*, while everything else is

only a passive effect. There is, rather, interaction on the basis of economic necessity, which *ultimately* always asserts itself."

Engels also emphasised that while, in general, ideas and institutions are products of economic conditions, the exact form which they take in a particular country at a particular time cannot be explained exclusively from the economic conditions of that country at that time. On the contrary, while the influence of economic development always asserts itself, current ideas and institutions must always depend on a variety of factors in a country's life, including the character and traditions of its people, the personalities of its leading men, and, above all, its past history.

Considering, for example, the development of legal ideas, Engels pointed out that while law always reflects existing economic conditions, "the form in which this happens can vary considerably. It is possible, as happened in England, in harmony with the whole national development, to retain in the main the forms of the old feudal laws while giving them a bourgeois content; in fact, directly giving a bourgeois meaning to the old feudal name. But also, as happened in Western continental Europe, Roman law, the first world law of a commodity-producing society . . . can be taken as a foundation. . . . After the great bourgeois revolution, such a classic law code as the French *Code Civil* can be worked out on the basis of this same Roman Law" (*Ludwig Feuerbach*, chap. 4).

Thus in these cases legal ideas and codes of law arose, not as a direct product of economic conditions, but by a process of working upon and adapting the already existing law, which belonged to a past epoch, into forms suitable for the new epoch.

It has been the same, Engels points out, with philosophy. "I consider the ultimate supremacy of economic development established," he wrote in a letter to C. Schmidt, October 27th, 1890. "But it comes to pass within conditions imposed by the particular sphere itself: in philosophy, for instance, through the operation of economic influences (which again generally act only through political etc. disguises) upon the existing philosophic material handed

down by predecessors."

The actually existing ideas and institutions of a country, therefore, cannot be explained solely from the economic conditions of that country at a particular time. "Economy creates nothing absolutely new," Engels wrote in the same letter. "But it determines the way in which existing material of thought is altered and further developed."

What is of fundamental importance in the development of ideas and institutions is, then, simply that they do not have an independent development but are created on the basis of the given economy. The problem always remains of explaining the peculiarities of the development of ideas and institutions in each particular country, and what role they play in each particular period of its history. This problem can never be solved by means of general formulas alone, but only in the light of the facts themselves.

In short, when it is a matter, not of the abstract enunciation of general principles, but of the application of these principles in the explanation of particular historical events, then the detailed study of the actual mode of derivation of ideas and institutions on the basis of economic conditions, and of the active role they play in events, cannot be neglected. And Marx himself has provided examples of this application in his historical writings.

In *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, for example, he shows in detail how particular ideas and institutions, political parties, political conflicts and trends of ideas, arose on the basis of definite economic and class relations in French society in the mid-19th century, and how the ensuing struggles in the realms of politics and ideology influenced the fate of the various classes and of the French economy as a whole.

Such detailed understanding of the political and ideological factors, their basis and influence, is, of course, vitally important in the analysis made of a present situation with a view to mapping out practical policy. We cannot arrive at a policy for the working-class movement in a given situation simply from an analysis, however exact, of the economic position. It is necessary to take into account all the existing political

factors, in all their complexity, and also the various trends of ideas, and to understand how these not only reflect but influence the economic situation, in order to arrive at a practical policy. For in given economic circumstances, political action, and also ideological struggle generally, has a decisive effect in influencing the further course of economic development, the fate of the various classes and of the whole economy.

Chapter Six

CLASS IDEAS AND CLASS RULE

The Establishment

On the basis of given relations of production there are always created ideas and institutions adapted to maintain, consolidate and develop that basis. These are ideas which implicitly accept and justify the established property and class relations, and institutions which work to preserve those class relations and to administer, consolidate and develop that form of property. People could not carry on social production without entering into definite relations of production, and those relations of production could not be maintained without the appropriate ideas and institutions.

Thus when a given economic system is established there always crystallises out from the whole process of ideological and institutional activity a complex of ideas and institutions which serves the definite function of preserving the established order. To this may be conveniently applied the newly invented, though ill-defined, term—"the establishment". It is created in controversy and struggle by the class whose interest it is to establish and consolidate the particular economic system.

At the centre of the establishment is the state power and the legal system. The state and the laws serve to defend property and to regulate its use and inheritance. The political and legal system, with the corresponding ideology, become established as guardians of property.

The Romans, for example, to consolidate their slave empire developed first republican institutions to supplant the petty kings of an earlier period, and a republican ideology; and

when these institutions and ideas proved unable to hold social antagonisms in check, they developed a centralised military dictatorship.

With the break-up of the Roman Empire and the rise of feudalism in Europe, the forms of government changed. The kingdoms, principalities, dukedoms, etc., which were established all over Europe developed as forms of feudal rule, which served to defend, maintain and consolidate the feudal system. And of central importance in what may be termed the feudal establishment in Europe was the Catholic Church.

The rising bourgeoisie came into conflict with the feudal system and with feudal rule, and as a product of its struggle set up national republics, parliamentary states, constitutional monarchies, which allowed free scope to the development of capitalism, defended the interests of the bourgeoisie, stood guard over their property, and so served to shape and consolidate the basis of capitalist society.

Lastly, the working class in its struggle for socialism has to establish a democratic socialist state, which will have the task of eliminating the remnants of capitalism, guarding socialist property, and directing the work of socialist construction.

Without such means none of these economies could have been consolidated. It is only with the help of a state, of a political and legal system, and of corresponding ideologies, that a system of economy becomes established and is able to develop. The exact form and character of the state—whether it is a monarchy like Britain, or a republic like the U.S.A.—and of the political and legal ideas and institutions, and the various changes which they undergo, depend on a variety of circumstances in the life and tradition of each people. Such features are determined historically by special circumstances of time and place. But they are always subject to the controlling condition that they serve to consolidate and develop a particular economic basis.

Religions, philosophies, literary and artistic movements develop as ramifications of the establishment. No social-economic formation could be kept in being and made to work without them, any more than without politics and laws. And

they are no more independent of the economic basis than are politics or law. These types of ideology, and the corresponding institutions, are developed by people on the basis of their given production relations; and in this development there crystallise out religious orthodoxies, philosophical schools, literary and artistic canons, which come to assume a special authority as bulwarks of the social order.

In the heyday of feudalism in Western Europe the Catholic Church possessed enormous authority, and Catholic orthodoxy permeated philosophy, literature and the arts. This orthodoxy was upheld by the temporal power—by the feudal rulers and their states, and by the laws. The cruel zeal with which the Church pursued heretics, and was supported by the rulers, is not explicable simply as religious fanaticism. For why was there such fanaticism? Catholic orthodoxy had become established as an essential part of the social order; and the Church, as a great landowner, together with the other great landowners, sensed the danger of social disruption—and rightly too—lurking behind every heresy.

With the rise of the bourgeoisie, new religious and philosophical ideas came into ascendency. In religion emphasis was placed on the individual conscience and the individual's direct relation with God. Philosophers propounded the sovereignty of science and reason, and from this point of view subjected the old feudal ideas to devastating criticism. They examined anew the foundations of knowledge and tried to show how knowledge could be extended and humanity be set upon the road to progress. In this they effectively served the new bourgeoisie in getting rid of feudalism and consolidating capitalism.

Now, when capitalism is in decay and is being challenged by socialism, the philosophers of the establishment have a very different tale to tell. They say that reason is powerless, that knowledge is an illusion, that material progress is a mistake and that the means whereby men have hoped to achieve it lead them into difficulties and disasters. These new orthodoxies in turn help to defend the dying system and to stave off the challenge of socialism.

In the same way can be traced out how the medieval songs and stories and religious art, for example, helped the feudal system take shape and consolidate itself; and how the modern novel, drama, etc., helped to eliminate feudalism and helped the capitalist system take shape and consolidate itself.

Ruling Class and Ruling Ideas

Since the dissolution of primitive communism, society has been divided into antagonistic classes, into exploiters and exploited, these classes themselves being products of economic development. And corresponding to the economic structure of society at the given stage of development, to the given system of production relations, one or another class has occupied the dominating position in economy and has assumed leadership of society as a whole.

It is always a particular class which plays the leading part in establishing and then in consolidating a given economic system, in which that particular class is dominant, the ruling class. It is accordingly always this class which is primarily responsible for establishing the ideas and institutions to guard the social order. The establishment is a class establishment—developed on the basis of the forms of property and the class relations with which the interests of the ruling class are bound up.

"Upon the different forms of property, upon the social conditions of existence, rises an entire superstructure of distinct and peculiarly formed sentiments, illusions, modes of thought and views of life," wrote Marx, in *The Eighteenth Brumaire* (chap. 3). "The entire class creates and forms them out of its material foundations and out of the corresponding social relations."

The ruling class is able to achieve this because of its ownership of the material means of production and its control, through the state, of material power. "The class which is the ruling material force in society is at the same time its ruling intellectual force," wrote Marx and Engels in *The German Ideology*. For "the class which has the means of material production at its disposal has control at the same time over the

means of mental production, so that thereby, generally speaking, the ideas of those who lack the means of mental production are subject to it".

Thus Marx and Engels declared in *The Communist Manifesto:* "The ruling ideas of each age have ever been the ideas of its ruling class."

This ideological domination is, indeed, an essential element of class domination. Class domination cannot continue unless the ruling class can establish ruling institutions according to its own ideas, and by the general acceptance of those ideas secure the general acceptance of its institutions and rule. To maintain its material rule, the ruling class must always maintain its rule over the minds of men. It must bind the intellectual forces of society to itself, and secure the propagation of ideas which, by expressing its dominance, forestall any challenge to its dominance.

The Role of Intellectuals

When we speak of the ideas of the ruling class being the ruling ideas, this does not mean, of course, that all the members of the ruling class participate in forming and propagating those ideas. The consolidation of the economic system, and of the system of class rule, always requires certain individuals to undertake administrative and executive functions; and similarly, certain individuals always come to specialise in an intellectual function.

Every class which plays an active as distinct from a merely passive role in social change always finds its own intellectual representatives. And the ruling class has always its cadres of intellectuals, who no more constitute a separate class than do administrators and officials. It is true that such specialised sections do, from time to time, acquire vested interests of their own. They become adepts at feathering their own nests. This may even, on occasion, as Marx and Engels observed in *The German Ideology*, "develop into a certain opposition and hostility" between them and the chief part of the ruling class. But "in case of a practical collision, in which the class itself is endangered", this always "automatically comes to nothing".

We can occasionally observe this happening today: many intellectuals who habitually speak or write the rudest things about industrialists or financiers rally solidly around them whenever the system itself is endangered.

The intellectuals of the ruling class constitute, so long as that rule remains secure, the dominant intellectual force of society, who elaborate its "sentiments, illusions, modes of thought and views of life". That they are in general not conscious of performing this function does not contradict the fact that this is the function they perform.

"Ideology is a process accomplished by the so-called thinker consciously, indeed, but with a false consciousness," wrote Engels in a letter to Mehring (July 14th, 1893). "The real motives impelling him remain unknown to him. . . . He works with mere thought-material, which he accepts without examination as the product of thought; he does not investigate further for a more remote process independent of thought."

We find this ideological process strikingly exemplified today. Thinkers with the most diverse views—atheists and devout Christians, social democrats and conservatives—are all impelled to express one and the same point of view, namely, that man is ignorant of his fate and at the mercy of events which he cannot control. What is this but the point of view of the ruling capitalist class in the throes of its final crisis? These thinkers come from the most diverse social strata, but they all peddle the same views in the service of the ruling class, poisoning the minds of hearers and readers with the same ideas.

The relation of intellectuals with the class they represent was defined by Marx in writing about the literary and political representatives of the petty bourgeoisie in the 1848 period in France.

It should not be imagined, he wrote, that these ideologists of the shopkeepers "are indeed all shopkeepers or enthusiastic champions of shopkeepers. According to their education and their individual position they may be as far apart as heaven from earth. What makes them representatives of the petty bourgeoisie is that fact that in their minds they do not get beyond the limits which the latter do not get beyond in life,

that they are consequently driven, theoretically, to the same problems and solutions to which material interests and social position drive the latter practically. This is, in general, the relationship between the political and literary representatives of a class and the class they represent." (*Eighteenth Brumaire*, chap. 3.)

Thus the intellectuals of the ruling class are not necessarily themselves members of that class, in the sense of being born into it, or of owning property, or of enjoying all its privileges. Sometimes, indeed, far from enjoying such privileges their position is insecure—they are merely hired and fired, like court poets in the past or journalists today. Many leading intellectuals of the feudal nobility came from the peasantry, and many leading intellectuals of the capitalist class have been drawn from the petty bourgeoisie or from the working class. Indeed, as Marx pointed out in *Capital* (vol. III, chap. 36), "the more a ruling class is able to assimilate the most prominent men of a ruled class, the more solid and dangerous is its rule".

This process also works in reverse. When a ruling class is in decay, and another class is rising to challenge it, individuals from its own ranks, including generally some of the most able and intellectually gifted, pass over to serve the rival revolutionary class.

As we have stated, every class which is active in the arena of history finds its own intellectual representatives, who express its social tendencies, its sentiments and views. It is evident, therefore, that in times of profound social change, when all classes are brought into activity, a great creative ferment of ideas takes place. The intellectual life of such periods expresses, not the activity of one class only, but the ferment of activity of all classes.

The class which plays the leading part in shaping the social order has not only to find means to formulate and systematise its own ideas, but secure their acceptance by the whole of society. Here revolutionary intellectuals, revolutionary thought and propaganda, have an important part to play. When the old social order is in decline, the ideas of the ruling class begin to lose their vitality, become incapable of further development,

and are more and more rejected by wide sections of people. All the harder do the rulers fight to retain their hold and to use all the means at their disposal to discredit and persecute "dangerous" thoughts. The revolutionary class, on the other hand, in taking the lead of the whole movement against the old social system, has not only to get its own ideas worked out but make them the rallying, mobilising force of the whole movement. It was with this in mind that Marx wrote, in the *Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Law*: "Theory becomes a material force as soon as it has gripped the masses."

The Transformation of the Superstructure

In those revolutionary periods when the material forces of production come into conflict with the existing relations of production, the entire establishment which guards the existing forms of property begins to be shaken. In such periods, the property relations which had served as forms of development of the material forces of production, turn into their fetters. And in the sphere of social consciousness this fact expresses itself in consciousness of the dominant ideas and institutions as fetters, in other words, as outmoded, oppressive, unjust, false. New, revolutionary, ideas arise.

"When people speak of ideas that revolutionise society," Marx and Engels wrote in *The Communist Manifesto*, "they do but express the fact that, within the old society, the elements of the new one have been created, and that the dissolution of the old ideas keeps even pace with the dissolution of the old conditions of existence."

The class struggle, by which the social transformation is effected, is based on the conflict of economic interests between classes occupying different places in the system of production relations, each class striving for its own economic interest. It is at basis economic. But it is carried on and fought out in the sphere of politics and law, of religion and philosophy, of literature and art. It is carried on and fought out, not only by means of the economic pressure plus coercion and violence exerted by one class against another class, but also by means of a battle of ideas, in which are expressed the tendencies of

all classes of society.

"All historical struggles, whether they proceed in the political, religious, philosophical or some other ideological domain, are in fact only the more or less clear expression of the struggle of social classes," wrote Engels in his Preface to the third German edition of Marx's *Eighteenth Brumaire.*

Just as there is a distinction between the production relations and the corresponding forms of social consciousness, so there is a distinction between the material economic interests of the contending classes and their consciousness of their aims and of the issues over which they contend. But when the decisive moment of action arrives, the underlying economic interests and aims are always openly revealed.

"As in private life one differentiates between what a man thinks and says of himself and what he really is and does," wrote Marx in the *Eighteenth Brumaire* (chap. 3), "so in historical struggles one must distinguish still more the phrases and fancies of parties from their real interests, their conception of themselves from their reality. . . . Thus the Tories of England long imagined that they were enthusiastic about Monarchy, the Church, and the beauties of the old English Constitution, until the day of danger wrung from them the confession that they are only enthusiastic about ground rent."

Contradictions and conflicts are always arising in the superstructure of society, in the sphere of social consciousness, just because on the basis of given relations of production men cannot live together in complete harmony. Such contradictions may find temporary solution, only to break out again in new forms. So even the best established ideas and the most conservative institutions undergo changes.

In such contradictions fought out in the superstructure we should distinguish those which only reflect a readjustment to new events on the basis of the same relations of production, and those which reflect the striving of a revolutionary class to change the relations of production.

Of course, the ruling and possessing classes themselves are continually enmeshed in contradictions, which receive expression in ideological and political controversies as a result

of which the establishment may be changed, perhaps profoundly, in response to changed circumstances. And it often happens that "revolts" break out against some or other part of the establishment, expressing the discontent of some particular grouping. Such revolts sometimes fizzle out; in other cases they are carried to success, and then yesterday's "rebels" become today's men of the establishment.

Any real challenge to the social system is preceded by and accompanied by such revolts. But there is a difference between revolutionary ideas which express the outlook and aims of a revolutionary class impelled by class interests to attack the property of the rulers, and ideas which would at most make some changes in the superstructure and leave property unmolested.

It is also worth noting, in passing, that just as at feudal courts there were ecclesiastics who rebuked the sins of the rulers and jesters who made jokes about them, so every establishment has its conscience-keepers and its jesters. This phenomenon should never be confused with real opposition.

When, as outcome of the class struggle, the old ruling class is overthrown, then, as Marx put it in the Preface to *Critique of Political Economy*, "with the change of the economic foundation the entire immense superstructure is more or less rapidly transformed".

The upheaval in the economic sphere, in the basic social relations, brings an upheaval also throughout the whole sphere of ideas and institutions. The old is overcome by the new. This means, primarily, that the former revolutionary ideas become developed into the authoritative ideas of a new establishment; and in part new institutions, constituted in accordance with these ideas, replace the old ones, while in part old institutions are reconstituted in accordance with new ideas and to serve new purposes. With this the entire content of social consciousness is eventually changed. With the dissolution of old relations of production, ideas which were formed on that basis become at first outmoded and reactionary, and in the end irrelevant and absurd. Ideological controversies which absorbed attention on the old basis become

pointless, and new ones take their place.

But of course this does not mean that nothing remains from the old superstructure—or that development in the superstructure proceeds only by revolutionary negation, and not at all by evolution.

"Men never relinquish what they have won," wrote Marx in a letter to Annenkov (December 28th, 1846). "But this does not mean that they never relinquish the social form in which they have acquired certain productive forces. On the contrary, in order that they may not be deprived of the result attained, and forfeit the fruits of civilisation, they are obliged, from the moment when the form of their intercourse no longer corresponds to the productive forces acquired, to change all their traditional social forms."

When this change is made, the "fruits of civilisation" won in the past are preserved. They are preserved by .the new social forms, whereas they were placed in jeopardy by the decay and decadence of the old social forms. Thus not only the productive forces acquired, but advances achieved in culture, are retained and carried forward in new ways.

Even when something is lost, perhaps for a long time, as a result of revolutions and wars, it is eventually regained. Engels remarked that much of the old Roman law in Europe was eventually utilised in the development of bourgeois law. And why is this? It is because the Roman law contained much that is of value for regulating men's relationships not only in slave society but in any commodity-producing society based on private property.

Similarly, while certain views expressed in Greek art belonged to a slave society and have disappeared, the inspiration of that art has not disappeared and is not likely to do so. That is because Greek art gave expression not only to special aspects of life and human relationships in slave society but to universal aspects of life and human relationships in any society. It is also because Greek art made a permanent contribution to artistic technique. For these reasons, incidentally, Greek art is likely to survive much longer than Roman law, since while Roman law will have nothing but a purely

historical interest left in communist society, Greek art will still retain a living interest.

At the present day the whole heritage of culture acquired up to and during the capitalist period is being threatened in the phase of the decadence of capitalism—not only by the well known and degrading tendencies of commercialism, but by physical annihilation. It is being claimed, preserved and carried forward in the fight for socialism.

Institutions, Ideas and Classes

What is the practical conclusion to be drawn from the Marxist theory of the basis and superstructure?

It is that dominant ideas and institutions which are products of a particular economic structure can no more be regarded as sacrosanct and unchangeable than the economic structure itself. They express neither eternal truths nor inviolable forms of human association. They simply express the outlook and interests corresponding to the given economic structure of society. And in society based on exploitation, this outlook and these interests can be none other than the outlook and interests of the dominant exploiting class.

The ancient Greeks, for example, were taught that their laws were instituted by divinely inspired legislators. And so these laws were regarded as sacrosanct. But Marxism shows that in fact these laws were the laws of a slave society, defining the privileges, rights and duties of the citizens of such a society and defending the property of the possessing classes. They were the expression of definite historically constituted class interests.

Similarly, we today are told that the state institutions in Great Britain and the United States have come into being as the realisation of Christian ideals, of Western values, of the conception of individual liberty, and so on. And so these institutions and the ideas with which they are associated are represented as sacrosanct, just as quite different institutions and ideas were represented in the past. But Marxism shows that in fact these institutions are institutions of capitalist society, based on the capitalist economic system, expressing

the interests of the ruling capitalist class. The Christian ideals, Western values, conception of individual liberty are in fact capitalist ideals, capitalist values, a capitalist conception of liberty.

Marxism, therefore, by calling attention to the economic, class basis of established institutions and ideas, teaches us to regard no institution and no ideas as "sacred".

"People always were and always will be the stupid victims of deceit and self-deceit in politics," wrote Lenin, "as long as they have not learned to discover the interests of one or another of the classes behind any moral, religious, political and social phrases, declarations and promises. The supporters of reforms and improvements will always be fooled by the defenders of the old, as long as they will not realise that every old institution, however absurd and rotten it may appear, is kept in being by the forces of one or other of the ruling classes. And there is only one way of breaking the resistance of these classes, and that is to find, in the very society which surrounds us, and to enlighten and organise for struggle, the forces which can and, by their social position, must form the power capable of sweeping away the old and of establishing the new." (*Three Sources and Three Component Parts of Marxism.*)

When the classes discontented with the existing social system begin to take up the struggle against it, they immediately find themselves confronted with a whole set of institutions, laws, customs, principles and views which serve to protect the existing system and to suppress opposition to it.

From the very moment when the British workers, for example, began to combine to demand higher wages and shorter hours of work, they found themselves confronted with oppressive laws enacted by oppressive institutions which thwarted their demands. They found themselves confronted with a parliament from which they were excluded, by laws which protected the employers, by views which approved the profit-making of the rich while condemning any combination of the poor.

Similarly, at an earlier stage, the English bourgeoisie had come into conflict with the royalist regime of King Charles I.

Their economic expansion was blocked by royal monopolies and taxes; and when they wanted these removed, they immediately came into conflict with both government and laws, and were denounced by churchmen and scholars for daring to infringe upon "the divine right of kings".

In general, the class which in pursuit of its material, economic interests comes into opposition against the ruling class, is thereby always brought into opposition against the whole establishment. The whole record of class struggles proves that the dominant, established ideas and institutions of any society protect and uphold the economic structure of that society and, therefore, the interests of the ruling class.

Marxism, then, advises us always to look for the class, material, economic interests behind and motivating all declarations and principles, all institutions and policies. It advises us not to respect but to despise ideas and institutions which serve the capitalist class against the working class, and to fight for new ideas and new or transformed institutions which will help organise and inspire the broad alliance of all working people to break the power and overcome the resistance of the capitalists, and build socialist society.

Chapter Seven

SOCIALISM AND COMMUNISM

Social Production and Social Ownership

Socialism means the establishment of new relations of production, a new economic basis for society, namely, the social ownership of the principal means of production.

With such an organisation of production, all exploitation of man by man is finally done away with. The capitalist ownership of factories, mills, mines, transport and other means of production is abolished; the entire system of finance and trade is taken out of capitalist hands; the ownership of land by landlords is abolished. After that, no worker is slaving any more for capitalist profit, no small producer is fleeced by landlords, moneylenders or middlemen. The drive to oppress and exploit other peoples and to force a way into markets is ended. No longer is any productive equipment under-employed because it is not profitable to use it. No longer are any workers unemployed because it is not profitable for the capitalists to buy their labour-power. No longer is good land made waste by greedy exploitation; no longer is food production limited, and stocks hoarded or destroyed, while millions are undernourished. There are no more economic crises; for their root cause—that while social production expands, the capitalist appropriation of the product renders the mass of people incapable of buying back the goods produced —is done away with. No one has a motive for war, or stands to make a profit out of it.

With socialism, production is no longer undertaken for profit, but for the sake of producing what people need. The primary consideration is to raise the standards of the people.

Production relations no longer act as fetters on production, but are adapted to the continuous development of social production in order to satisfy the continuously rising requirements of the whole of society.

Socialism is the organisation of plenty. The means to create plenty for all are already in being, thanks to the development of the social forces of production under capitalism. What remains is to use them.

In socialist production, the entire social product is disposed of by the producers, and is used (a) to replace means of production used up, to build reserves and further to expand production, (b) to carry on and expand social services, (c) to maintain defence forces so long as a socialist country is threatened by hostile capitalist neighbours, and (d) to provide means of consumption to the individual members of society.

It is in its power to increase the total social wealth that socialism proves its superiority over capitalism.

"In every socialist revolution," Lenin wrote in *The Immediate Tasks of the Soviet Government*, "there comes to the forefront the fundamental task of creating a social system superior to capitalism, viz. raising the productivity of labour." This task is soluble, because socialism can not only take over all the technological achievements of capitalism, and then better them; the greatest power of socialism, which makes it a social system superior to capitalism, is the power of people, of social labour released from the fetters which compel it to serve private profit. The drive for higher productivity is not undertaken as an end in itself, or as a task imposed upon people by self-appointed taskmasters. It is undertaken for the sake of enjoying plenty, of making plenty available to every individual. "Everything for the sake of man, for the benefit of man" is the slogan of a socialist party.

The Road to Socialism

Socialism came onto the agenda of history and became established as a result of the concurrence of three causes. First, after the establishment of capitalism the productive forces of modern industry developed rapidly and reached the

point where they had only to be brought under social ownership to be capable of producing plenty for all. Second, the working class achieved that degree of organisation and self-education where it was capable of taking command of production for itself. Third, scientific socialist theory was established, defining the socialist task and the necessary means to its fulfilment.

The victory of socialism is and can only be the outcome of class struggles, conditioned by the totality of social antagonisms brought into being by capitalism. Under a working-class leadership guided by scientific socialist theory the majority of the exploited succeeds in winning a political victory over the exploiters and depriving them of state power.

The socialist revolution is not, however, a single act but occupies a whole epoch of many years duration. The epoch in which the advanced capitalist countries develop to the monopoly stage and extend their imperialist conquests over the whole world is also the epoch in which imperialism is increasingly undermined and finally abolished, and in which socialism is established, grows in strength and finally triumphs everywhere.

The socialist revolution began with the October Revolution of 1917. After the second world war, socialist revolution was successful too in parts of Eastern Europe, in China and other parts of Asia and, later, in Cuba, in Latin America. It is always where the class contradictions are sharpest and the economic and political power of capital weakest that the break-through is made. At the same time, the U.S.S.R. proved a strong friend and protector for the newer socialist states: without this protection the people's democracies of Europe would hardly have escaped large-scale imperialist intervention, and certainly not the revolutionary regime of Cuba. From October 1917 those socialists of all lands who were both sincere and scientific regarded the defence of the socialist Soviet Union as amongst their first concerns, because its success was a success for socialism everywhere, and its defeat would have been a disaster for socialism everywhere.

The October Revolution gave a great impetus to anti-

imperialist struggle in the colonial empires. From that time, the resistance of colonial peoples against imperialist exploitation grew into strong and organised liberation movements, with ever more clearly formulated anti-imperialist aims. After the second world war the barriers began to crack. Today a large part of the former colonial world has already won political independence. The independence of the rest cannot be long delayed. And the politically liberated peoples can count on the assistance of the economically strong socialist sector of the world in building their economies as something other than raw material bases and spheres of investment for capitalist monopolies.

The economic growth of the socialist countries, which have come together to constitute a world socialist bloc, and the downfall of colonialism, have brought about a decisive change in the balance of world economic and political forces in favour of socialism. The imperialists are hemmed in, and cannot any longer do as they please with the peoples of the world.

"The world is going through an epoch of revolution," said Khrushchov, speaking for the Central Committee at the 1961 Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. "Socialist revolutions, anti-imperialist national-liberation revolutions, people's democratic revolutions, broad peasant movements, popular struggles to overthrow fascist and other despotic regimes, and general democratic movements against national oppression—all these merge in a single world-wide revolutionary process undermining and breaking up capitalism. . . . Today practically any country, irrespective of its level of development, can enter on the road leading to socialism."

The economically more developed capitalist countries have, as is obvious, been economically ripe for socialism for a long time. The building of socialism in these countries would not face those difficulties of building up industries from scratch which socialist construction has so far had to face whenever it has been undertaken. Socialism is delayed primarily by political causes—by the firmly consolidated economic and political power of the monopolies, by the influence they exert

over people's minds by hundreds and hundreds of well-worn channels, and by the existence, itself an effect of economic causes, of an opportunist leadership within the working-class movement which is not merely indifferent but hostile to scientific socialist ideas. However, the revolutionary movement in these countries does not face such discouragements and insuperable difficulties as its enemies like to pretend. It is the monopolies that have to face insuperable difficulties in view of their own economic contradictions, the growing strength of the socialist world and of the colonial liberation movements, and the demands of the people of their own countries. Capitalism is falling behind in competition with socialism, which year by year will increasingly demonstrate not only its technical superiority but its power to raise the people's standards of living. Every day the rationality and practicality of the ideas of scientific socialism for the working-class movement become more evident. It is clear, therefore, that the central fortresses of capitalism are by no means impregnable.

Socialist revolution, occurring at different stages of the development of the world crisis of capitalism and under different local conditions, follows different courses and exhibits different patterns.

The Russian Revolution was accomplished in the midst of war, by the forcible seizure of power by the popularly elected Soviets; this power was preserved only by revolutionary civil war and by beating off armed intervention; socialism was successfully constructed thanks to enormous sacrifices and great revolutionary discipline amidst conditions of hostile capitalist encirclement. Evidently it was these latter circumstances which made possible the inexcusable distortions of socialist policies and the crimes against individuals which took place during a period under the Stalin regime, and which jeopardised the construction of socialism and partly disoriented a whole generation of socialist intellectuals. The European people's democracies were established in the aftermath of war, following the dismantling of former fascist regimes or regimes of fascist occupation. The Chinese People's Republic and other people's republics of Asia were established

as a result of revolutionary wars. The revolutionary regime in Cuba was established by a popular armed uprising against a U.S.-backed fascist dictatorship.

The perspectives which socialists set before themselves in the period now opening up are not those of war. A war fought with nuclear weapons does not offer favourable prospects for building socialism—very much the reverse. But with the balance of world forces in favour of socialism and of the national liberation movements, war can be prevented. The socialist aim, which no setbacks or imperialist manoeuvres can blot out, is one of international agreements and measures of disarmament—the peaceful coexistence of socialism and capitalism.

This is not a hopeful perspective for capitalism. It contains the brightest prospects for the democratic transfer of power in capitalist countries to the working people, though local violence provoked by imperialists at the end of their tether is not ruled out.

Already in 1951 the British Communist Party adopted the programme, *The British Road to Socialism*, which proclaimed the possibility of ending capitalist power and inaugurating socialism in Britain by a socialist parliament which would be elected and its legislative measures backed and implemented by the mass action of the majority of the working people. The 1958 edition of the programme stated: "Using our traditional institutions and rights, we can transform parliament into the effective instrument of the people's will, through which the major legislative measures of the change to socialism will be carried. Using the rights already won in the labour movement's historic struggle for democracy, we can change capitalist democracy, dominated by wealth and privilege, into socialist democracy, where only the interests of the people count . . . the working class has the strength, united in struggle for socialism, to overcome all resistance and reach its goal."

The perspective of peaceful coexistence also contains the prospects of a non-capitalist development in the former colonial countries, leading by stages to socialism. "Only active struggle by the working class and all working people, only the

unification of all democratic and patriotic forces in a broad national front, can lead the peoples on to that path," said Khrushchov in the speech already quoted. "The peoples who have achieved national independence are entering upon the road of independent development at a time when the forces of imperialism and their ability to affect the course of events are steadily declining, while the forces and influence of socialism are steadily growing. In the circumstances, it will be immeasurably easier for them to solve the problems of economic and social development."

Socialist Planning

Socialist relations of production allow, for the first time, production to be planned. Because the means of production are socially owned, their use is a matter of social decision, and becomes subject to social planning.

With private ownership, production cannot be planned. It is planned within the workshop or, where an industry is sufficiently monopolised, for a whole industry—but not for society generally.

There is often talk of planning under capitalism, but the fact that the means of production are privately owned and the product privately appropriated makes planning impossible. Particular capitalist concerns or groupings plan their production; but each concern plans for its own profit. An overall plan, on the other hand, would require that all branches of production should be planned together as a single whole, the production of each sector being subordinated to the requirements of the general plan rather than to its own greatest immediate profit. And yet, under capitalism, each concern must pursue its own profit, or go under. Any overall plan breaks down. The fact that some industries or public services may be nationalised makes no essential difference here. The fact that railways, or fuel and power, may be nationalised, as in Britain, can be of some advantage to the great private monopolies which make use of their services; but it does not mean that production as a whole can be planned, any more than it could if private ownership were universal.

It is only when society has taken over the whole direction of all the principal branches of production on the basis of social ownership, and adapts production to the systematic improvement of the conditions of the masses of the people, that planning comes effectively into operation over production as a whole.

And then production not only can but must be planned, if it is to go on successfully. Planning is an economic necessity of socialist production. For obviously if there were no plan, and different people in different sectors of production did as they pleased, everything would soon be in confusion.

A socialist plan takes, to begin with, the form of a law promulgated by a socialist government. The word "law" has two senses: there are "laws" enacted by governments, which are thus expressions of the will of men; and there are "objective laws" which regulate real relationships and processes of both nature and society independent of the will of men. The use of the same word with two such different meanings is no doubt due to the historical fact that people originally believed that laws of nature were decrees of God imposed upon his creation just as laws are decreed by governments. Governments, however, are not like God, though they sometimes think they are. When God said "Let there be light", there *was* light—or so we are told. But when a government promulgates a law, what comes of it does not depend only on the intentions of the government but on objective laws regulating the social relations of the people who are supposed to obey the law.

Production is an activity carried on by people in society, and the actual results of what people do by way of productive activity depend on both the objective properties of their means of production and on the interdependencies of their own social relations and social processes. In production people are related to one another and to nature: the results of productive efforts depend on the laws of these relations. Hence any production plan which is capable of being fulfilled must be based on knowledge of those laws, and must take account of them. If you want to produce results, you must know the laws which regulate the production of such results and proceed in

conformity to those laws and in no other way.

Thus, for example, no plan to build steel-framed buildings will come off unless there is a supply of steel; there will be no supply of steel unless it is made and transported; it will not be made unless iron and the other ingredients are dug up and processed, and it will not be transported unless oil or coal is obtained, or electric power produced. Again, if you want to produce an abundance of any kind of consumer goods —nylon stockings, say—then you must produce the equipment necessary for making them: no equipment for the artificial fibres industry, no nylon stockings. Similarly, if you provide such equipment in excess of what is required for whatever it is proposed to produce, then some of it will stand idle. And so on. Again, in the fields of finance and distribution, that amount of currency must be provided which is needed for the exchanges of activities and products which are actually going to take place; excess or deficiency will alike cause dislocation.

Suppose, then, that the government of a socialist country enacted a "Five-Year Plan Law" decreeing a vast increase of production, but without taking exactly into account the existing economic resources of the country, its existing sources of raw materials and productive capacity. Would such a law be effective? It certainly would not, and what would happen would not be a vast increase of production but a vast increase of muddle and discontent.

A socialist plan, therefore, must be drawn up on the basis of scientific knowledge of economic laws and of scientifically ascertained economic and technical data. This knowledge must be exact and quantitative. Political slogans and vague economic generalisations incapable of mathematical expression are, by themselves, liable to be worse than useless. This scientific knowledge—the knowledge of objective necessity the appreciation of which adds up to the freedom of socialist planning—relates both to the social-economic relations of human beings and to the properties of the materials and natural forces used in production. In the science of socialist planning there is already coming into being the unity of the natural and social sciences.

From this it follows that much more is required for socialist planning than political slogans and enthusiasm, and that it is not at all a question of arbitrarily setting targets. The fact that means of production are socially owned does not imply that mistakes, and serious mistakes, cannot easily be made in socialist planning. Methods of improvisation and decree, which may be necessary in the immediate aftermath of socialist revolution and are based largely on political expediency, need to be abandoned as quickly as possible.

Does this imply that planning should be in the hands of a commission of experts, a kind of technocracy? Of course, it needs experts; and the more expert they are, and the better they work together as a collective, the more effective will be the planning. But a socialist plan is carried out by people and for people. It is people, with their skill and enthusiasm, who do the work, and it is their requirements which the plan is meant to satisfy. Obviously, people's requirements cannot be dictated to them by experts, nor can they be herded and directed like sheep. Since people are themselves the most important of all the forces of production, a socialist plan fails unless people are mobilised for production; and the productive force of people working for themselves is not mobilised by decision of any commission of experts, but only by decision of those very people. Successful socialist planning must, therefore, combine the use of the most exact scientific knowledge of nature and of economic laws with the most democratic methods of deciding what is to be done and of organising the doing it. There is no contradiction here—except in the minds of such high and mighty experts as regard the majority of working people as "the common herd", invincibly ignorant and incapable of knowing what they want or what is good for them.

Moreover, the initiative of working people in finding their own means of tackling a particular job is a tremendous factor in the development of production—as the Stakhanov movement in Russia, or aspects of the Great Leap in China, sensationally demonstrated. New inventions, new techniques, new ways of working together spring from the democratic co-

operation of working people who are their own masters; great talents, both individual and collective, and both mental and manual, come to light. Thus the establishment of democracy in work is itself a revolutionising element in the forces of production. It is the discovery of how to release and use in production the talents of the masses, which is comparable to the discovery of how to use a new source of physical energy—steam power, or nuclear power.

From Socialism to Communism

When socialism is established, how does society continue to develop? Marx showed that after production has been placed on a socialist basis and all exploitation of man by man has disappeared, a further stage of transition begins—the transition to communist society. He regarded socialism as only "the first phase of communist society"—a comparatively brief phase of transition from society based on the exploitation of one class by another to a fully developed classless society.

"Between capitalist and communist society lies the period of the revolutionary transformation of the one into the other," he wrote in *Critique of the Gotha Programme.* And in this period, the period of socialism, there is "communist society, not as it has developed on its own foundations, but, on the contrary, just as it emerges from capitalist society; which is thus in every respect, economically, morally and intellectually, still stamped with the birthmarks of the old society from whose womb it emerges."

In what respects is socialism as it emerges from capitalism still "stamped with the birthmarks of the old society"? In what respects does it reveal its transitional character? And how are these defects to be got over?

"To each according to his needs"

The first respect in which socialism reveals its transitional character is in production itself and in the way the social product is distributed. Socialism starts off with the productive forces at the level they have reached under capitalism. Hence while the aim of socialist planning is to satisfy every require-

ment of every individual, this aim cannot be fully realised for a long time—not until there has been an immense advance of production, far away beyond capitalist production.

Such an advance is certainly practical. The 20-year plan adopted by the Soviet Union in 1961, which is a sober and scientific plan, envisages that in twenty years Soviet industry will produce nearly twice as much as is now produced in the whole of the non-socialist world, and that the production of Soviet agriculture will increase by three and a half times.

Meantime individuals can only receive a share of the social product, not according to the full needs of each, but according to the quantity and quality of the work each has contributed. As production is still restricted, the principle of socialist production is: "From each according to his ability, to each according to his work." But in the higher phase of communism production has been so much enlarged that an entirely different principle operates: "From each according to his ability, to each according to his needs."

In *Critique of the Gotha Programme* Marx regarded the principle of equal pay for equal work—the principle of socialism—as still a hangover of "bourgeois law". This law is only finally abolished in communist society. Then all have an equal right to satisfy their needs.

Of course, the principle of equally satisfying the needs of all implies an inequality in what each receives, since needs are not equal—just as equal pay for equal work implies inequality, since some do more work than others. It is worth noting, therefore, that the idea that the social product should be equally divided amongst all has nothing to do with either socialism or communism. The social product is always unequally divided, first corresponding to unequal work and then corresponding to unequal needs. The equality which communism brings is the equal opportunity for everyone to develop all his capacities as a many-sided individual.

The inequality of needs has a peculiarly obvious application as between men and women—although this obvious fact is often obscured by speaking of the whole human race as "him". Women have special needs, as women; and to give

women the same opportunities in life as men, which has never been done to this day, would still never be done by allocating to them the same share as men, or bestowing on them equal pay for equal work. The "equality of women" does not mean that they should have the same as men. It means that they, as women, should have every opportunity to live fully—to have children and enjoy bringing them up, to gain knowledge, to do creative work, and, generally speaking, to enjoy life—without suffering any disadvantage as compared with men.

The Status of Labour

A second respect in which socialism reveals its transitional character is in the status of labour and people's attitude to work.

Under capitalism, the workers sell their labour-power to the capitalists. Labour is therefore a task undertaken for someone else, a burden. It is, in Biblical phrase, "the curse of Adam".

In socialism, labour-power is no longer bought and sold. The producer who receives according to his work is not receiving the price of the labour-power he has sold. He is receiving his share of the social product according to the contribution he has made to social production. And so the more he helps to produce, the more he will receive—which is not the case under capitalism, despite the promises that when productivity increases everyone's real wages will go up: they have never gone up yet except after a hard battle.

However, "incentives" are still required for labour. And these incentives are provided in socialist society precisely by the principle: "To each according to his work." Each knows that the better he works, the more he will get. At the same time, the *social* incentive grows in significance. People work because it is a good thing to do, because of companionship and the desire to contribute to social well-being, because of the social approval it earns. And this social incentive grows in significance as the memories of capitalist conditions fade and as the reward for labour increases; and also as, with technical innovations, work becomes less dull and heavy, more interesting and enjoyable, and the working day shorter.

"Productive labour, instead of being a means to the subjection of men, will become a means to their emancipation, by giving each individual the opportunity to develop and exercise all his faculties, physical and mental, in all directions," wrote Engels in *Anti-Dühring* (part III, chap. 3). "Productive labour will become a pleasure instead of a burden."

Only with the appearance of such a status of labour and such an attitude to it could communist society exist. When each receives no longer according to his work but according to his needs, it is evident that work is no longer done under any kind of compulsion but because people take pleasure in it and it is recognised as an indispensable part of life.

In capitalist conditions, driven by the lash of economic compulsion, working people sacrifice a third or more of their lives working for others. A man's own life begins only when he knocks off work; his working time is not his own, he is robbed of it. Only for a privileged few is reserved the pleasure of creative work, the consciousness that in their working time they are living their own lives as they wish to live, and not being robbed of life. For the mass of the people, their life is as Robert Tressell described it in *The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists:* "When the workers arrived in the morning they wished it was breakfast time. When they started work after breakfast they wished it was dinner time. After dinner they wished it was one o'clock on Saturday. So they went on, day after day, year after year, wishing their time was over and, without realising it, really wishing that they were dead."

In communism, the whole of people's time is their own. The contrast was pointed by William Morris, in his imaginary conversation in *News from Nowhere* with people of a communist society. To the question, "How you get people to work when there is no reward of labour," came the answer: "The reward of labour is life. Is that not enough? . . . Happiness without daily work is impossible." And the question, "As to how you gained this happiness" was answered: "Briefly, by the absence of artificial coercion, and the freedom of every man to do what he can do best, joined to the knowledge of what productions of labour we really want."

Division of Labour and the Individual

A third respect in which socialism reveals its transitional character is in the continued subordination of the individual to the principle of division of labour.

Division of labour is a fundamental feature of the advance of production. It is carried to a very high pitch in modern industry, where co-operative production depends on the division of labour into, and the co-ordination of, a very large number of labour processes, both manual and mental.

But in society based on exploitation, and in capitalist society in particular, "in the division of labour, man is also divided. All other physical and mental faculties are sacrificed to the development of one single activity". And this represents, as Engels went on to insist in *Anti-Dühring* (part III, chap. 3), "a subjection of the producers to the means of production". For "it is not the producer who controls the means of production, but the means of production which control the producer."

Socialism, by instituting social ownership of the means of production, begins to make the worker no longer the servant of the machine, but its master. Associated producers do now control their means of production. Therefore the way is open to overcome the stunting of men's faculties caused under capitalism by the division of labour. But this is a long process. It involves a thorough-going retraining of labour—to educate and train all-round people who, masters of their whole production process, are not individually tied to one particular part of it.

Marx pointed out in *Capital* (vol. I, chap. 15, sect. 9) that while the effect of capitalism is to turn the worker into a detail labourer, nevertheless the development of industrial production demands the opposite. It demands well-educated, all-round workers who can take on new jobs corresponding to new technical developments. "Modern industry, indeed, compels society, under penalty of death, to replace the detail worker of today, crippled by life-long repetition of one and the same operation and thus reduced to a mere fragment of a man, by the fully-developed individual, ready to face any change of

production, and to whom the different social functions he performs are but so many modes of giving free scope to his own natural and acquired powers."

As the technique of capitalist production has advanced, so has deadening repetition work of the conveyor-belt type become more prevalent. But the next step of technical advance is automation, where all repetitive drudgery is done by machines, and workers need to be highly skilled and adaptable, able to master and understand the machines they control and not merely to serve them.

The fullest scope of industrial development requires such people, but capitalist exploitation strangles them. For such people can flourish only as the masters of industry and not as wage-slaves. In socialism there begins the process of removing the subordination of the individual to division of labour and creating "all-round" individuals. Such people and only such people are the creators of the great new productive forces of communism. In this way, again, socialism is the first stage of communism: in socialist production is being created the new man of communist society.

This process also implies the ending of the very oldest effect of the division of labour—the separation, amounting to an antithesis, of mental from manual labour, and of town from countryside. The superior status of the mental compared with the manual worker and the exclusion of the one from the privileges of the other, and the superior opportunities of town as compared with country life, which still inevitably persist during the first phase of socialist society, lead to the stunting of individuals. The mental worker becomes divorced from reality, and the manual worker from the full understanding of it; the townsman becomes divorced from the life of nature, and the countryman too much immersed in it. These divisions will be brought to an end as people create communism. Then agriculture will become as highly equipped technically as industry, and the industrial centre not be cut off from the countryside; the level of all workers will be raised to that of men of science, and there will not be any stratum of intellectuals who imagine themselves a cut above the others.

A Single Form of Public Property

The fourth and final respect in which socialism reveals its transitional character is in the continued existence of different forms of property.

The whole tendency of the development of capitalism is to expropriate individual producers, depriving them of ownership of their means of production and converting them into wage-workers, and to drive small traders out of business while capital is more and more concentrated into the hands of a small number of very big concerns. But this is never more than a strong tendency. Monopoly capitalism is never more than a gigantic superstructure imposed on a basis of petty production and petty trading.

Socialism begins with the expropriation of the big capitalist concerns and big landowners, converting their property into public property, the property of the whole people. There remains a mass of small producers and small traders, including exploiters of labour. And these have to be eventually absorbed into the fabric of socialism, by making their property either public or co-operative property, as far as possible securing their consent by making this worth their while as individuals, partly enforcing it by economic pressure and legislative measures.

This problem especially concerns agriculture. In Britain the expropriation of individual producers has been carried through by capitalism in agriculture as well as in industry. Here not only industrial but agricultural production is performed mainly by wage-labour. But Britain is not typical in this respect. In many other countries where capitalism has developed or into which it has penetrated, agriculture has remained predominantly a peasant economy, in which the greater part of production is carried on, not by wage-labour, but by small peasant proprietors.

Under such conditions, could it be proposed not only to expropriate the big capitalists and landlords but also the working peasants? Recognising the necessity of the working class forming an alliance with the working peasantry in the fight against capitalists and landlords, Engels answered this

question long ago. In *The Peasant Question in France and Germany* he wrote: "When we are in possession of state power we shall not even think of forcibly expropriating the small peasants. Our task relative to the small peasant consists in effecting a transition from his private enterprise and private possession to co-operation, not forcibly but by dint of example and the proffer of social assistance for this purpose."

For peasant agriculture the task of building socialism involves expropriating the landlords, eliminating the exploitation of wage-labour, and converting small-scale peasant farming into large-scale co-operative farming and individual peasant property into co-operative property. At the same time, while the main branches of farming go over to co-operative methods, it is quite possible for the individual farmers to retain small plots of land for their own family use.

So then there arise, as in the U.S.S.R. and all other socialist countries at the present time, two forms of socialist property: public and co-operative. Both are socialist, because they are both forms through which associated producers hold their means of production in common and dispose of the product, work for themselves and not for exploiters, and receive according to their work. Their essential difference is the difference between a state or public enterprise, which belongs to the whole people, and a co-operative enterprise which belongs to a particular group of people.

This distinction means that while industrial production can be planned in a direct way, since all the means of production are public property the planning of agricultural production must proceed by indirect methods of encouraging a particular volume and direction of co-operative, peasant production by offering suitable economic incentives in the form of prices. This is why socialist planning has encountered greater difficulties in the sphere of agriculture than of industry.

When productivity had developed sufficiently, these different forms of property will fuse into a single form of public property. For when not only does each work according to his ability but receives according to his need, there is no sense left in some claiming exclusive, even though co-operative, ownership of

particular means of production and consequently appropriating the product. As they can receive all they need from the common product of the production of all, there is no advantage to them in co-operative ownership, and its retention would simply prove a hindrance to the organisation of social production and distribution.

This perspective, as envisaged in the U.S.S.R. by the Central Committee of the Communist Party, was outlined by Khrushchov at the 1961 Congress. "The still existing remnants of distinctions between classes will be eliminated," he said, "classes will fuse into a classless society of communist working people. . . . Agriculture will ascend to a high level that will make it possible to go over to communist forms of production and distribution. . . . Life itself is steadily bringing the national and co-operative forms of property closer together, and will ultimately lead to the emergence of a single, communist property and a single, communist principle of distribution."

The development of a complete communist society from its first phase of socialism is the consequence, then, of a great increase of social production. It means that, as *The Communist Manifesto* put it, "all production has been concentrated in the hands of a vast association of the whole nation", which plans production in all its branches in accordance with the needs of the people; the whole social product is then at the disposal of the same "vast association", so that it may be distributed according to need. The stunting of human capacities by inequalities of opportunity has been ended. There is possible what Marx, in the *Critique of the Gotha Programme*, called "the all-round development of the individual", and "all the springs of co-operative wealth flow more abundantly".

The transition from socialism to communism does not entail any sharp revolutionary break, any revolutionary change in the relations of production. On the contrary, socialism and communism are phases of one and the same social-economic formation, distinguished as phases simply by the degree of economic development and the completeness of the elimination of all earlier forms of ownership of means of production and of appropriation of the product. The vestiges of the

economic and social relations of the old class-divided society of exploitation, in struggle against which people build socialism, gradually disappear; and as they are sloughed off, the higher phase emerges. Unlike the opening phase, which is "still stamped with the birthmarks of the old society", the higher phase of communism, therefore, develops entirely "on its own foundation", that is, on the foundation of social ownership of all the means of production.

Chapter Eight

TOWARDS A HUMAN WAY OF LIFE

Measures of Transition from Socialism to Communism

By what means is the transition from socialism to communism effected in practice? Along with the introduction of ever higher techniques and increase of labour productivity goes the necessity of a series of related social measures.

It is necessary to provide all-round education, with a basis in scientific and technical education, for all members of society, and finally higher education for all. It is necessary to raise the general skill of all working people, to plan incentives accordingly, to level out distinctions and end the bracket of lower-paid unskilled and semi-skilled workers. It is necessary to provide for all ever fuller and more open opportunities for the exercise and development of all their faculties, for culture and knowledge, for contributing to life and understanding and enjoying life. And, in close association with all this, it is necessary progressively to shorten the working day.

Marx pointed out in *Capital* (vol. III, chap. 48) that people must always spend time producing to satisfy their wants. When exploitation of man by man is abolished, he wrote, they can accomplish this task "with the least expenditure of energy and under conditions most favourable to and worthy of their human nature. But it none the less remains a realm of necessity. Beyond it begins that development of human energy which is an end in itself, the true realm of freedom, which, however, can blossom forth only with this realm of necessity as its basis. The shortening of the working day is its basic prerequisite". Shortening of the working day is a fundamental measure in socialist production, and a condition without which the all-

round development of people's physical and mental abilities cannot be achieved. This all-round development is, as Marx declared, "an end in itself". It is not sought in order to increase production. On the contrary, the technical advance of production is sought in order that this development shall be achieved.

Along with all these measures go such measures as providing full maintenance for all citizens who are not able-bodied, rent-free housing, free travel and holidays, and generally the accumulation and use of public funds to provide first all kinds of services and then consumer goods to all members of society.

None of this is utopia. Every one of the measures mentioned here is either actually being put into operation or else being realistically planned today in the U.S.S.R.

The State in the Transition to Communism

The legislation and execution of all the measures for the transition to communism is done by the socialist state.

The socialist state is the instrument by means of which the working people undertake the management of social production in the interests of the whole of society. The state, as the representative of the whole people, controls the whole publicly-owned sector of socialist production. In this capacity it also exerts an ever increasing influence over economic development in its entirety, since all sectors of economy are dependent on the state sector. Thus, directly or indirectly, the state directs the whole development of socialist economy.

It is an organ of the whole working people. Hence it is from the start a state of an entirely new type, not the instrument of rule of a minority exploiting class, but the instrument of rule of the working masses.

"Our aim," wrote Lenin in 1917, in *Immediate Tasks of the Soviet Government*, "is to draw the whole of the poor into the practical work of administration . . . to ensure that every toiler shall perform state duties. The more resolutely we stand for ruthlessly firm government, the more varied must be the forms and methods of control from below, in order to weed out bureaucracy." And in *Can the Bolsheviks Retain State Power?*

he declared: "For the administration of the state in this spirit, we can immediately set up a state apparatus of about ten million, if not twenty million people—an apparatus unknown in any capitalist country."

At the same time, the state is essentially a means of coercion. In the socialist revolution state power is exerted to destroy the resistance of the dispossessed exploiters, to protect socialist property and the personal property of citizens from infringement by either individuals or groups inside the country and from foreign enemies, and to ensure that all the necessary measures for the construction of socialism are carried out. Such power requires a concentration of authority and material means in the hands of the workers' government and its executive forces. This is true for so long as conditions of class struggle remain within a socialist country and the building of socialism is resisted by the dispossessed exploiting classes and a dissident petty bourgeoisie. The socialist state first takes shape, and must always do so, as "the dictatorship of the proletariat".

This situation changes as the economic foundations of socialism are consolidated and all exploitation of man by man is abolished. Class struggles within the country then become a thing of the past. Of course, discontent and protest on the part of individuals is likely to continue; and so long as they have grounds for discontent, their protest is not anti-social.

"It would be wrong," said Khrushchov, reporting for the Central Committee at the 1961 Congress of the C.P.S.U., "to think that there is a wall between a state of the dictatorship of the proletariat and the state of the whole people. From the moment of its inception, the dictatorship of the proletariat contains features of universal socialist democracy. As socialism develops, these features become accentuated, and following its complete victory they become determinant. The state develops from an instrument of class domination into an organ expressing the will of the whole people."

How is this change from "dictatorship of the proletariat" to "state of the whole people" effected? By strengthening the elective basis of all organs of central and local government, and

extending their real powers; by enlarging the activities of mass organisations such as the trade unions, the co-operatives and cultural and educational societies, and extending public control over the activities of all government bodies; by drawing more and more people—not in hundreds or thousands but, as Lenin said, in millions—into work of day to day administration; by the practice of nation-wide discussion of the most important plans and laws; and by reducing the number of state officials and regularly renewing the composition of government bodies, so making government less of a full-time career or profession.

All this means that the role of state power as an instrument of coercion becomes less.

"The interference of the state power in social relations becomes superfluous in one sphere after another," wrote Engels in *Socialism, Utopian and Scientific* (chap. 3), "and then ceases of itself. The government of persons is replaced by the administration of things and the direction of the processes of production. The state is not abolished, it withers away". And in *The Origin of the Family etc.* (chap. 9) he concluded: "The society that will organise production on the basis of a free and equal association of the producers will put the whole machinery of state where it will then belong: into the museum of antiquities, by the side of the spinning-wheel and the bronze axe." There will then exist economic organs of society, and cultural organs, but not state organs.

This process of "the withering away of the state" is sure to be very prolonged, and cannot be complete until the attitude of all members of society towards work and other social obligations is such that social obligations are fulfilled without any external coercion. Moreover, it could not in any case be complete anywhere so long as socialism was not established everywhere, because for all that time affairs of defence would require state attention.

The Role of the Communist Party

Besides the state, as the public power of socialist society to enforce and direct the carrying out of the will of the people, there is also necessary the party. The socialist state comes into

being from the conquest of power by the working people, led by the working class. The working-class party, without whose leadership the working class cannot win power, is then the leading force which guides the state and the people in building socialism and advancing to communism.

So long as class struggle in any form continues; and beyond that, so long as the consequences of the old class divisions and division of labour remain in any shape or form; so long will there be a distinction between the vanguard and the masses. A necessary feature of the existence of classes is the conditioning of the material and mental activities of these classes by the place they occupy in social production. From this there invariably results the separating out of a conscious minority of the class, who become actively conscious of the long-term class interests and aims, and lead the whole class. The majority, on the other hand, carry on their lives in accordance with existing conditions, and become actively conscious of long-term social aims and enter into struggle for them only under the leadership of the minority. This is bound to be the case until not only do class distinctions disappear but all individuals are living and developing their capacities as members of society with equal status and opportunities. At that point the distinction between vanguard and masses will vanish, and the party, along with the state, will cease to exist.

The party in socialist society is not an organisation which "dictates". It is not an organ of power. As Sidney and Beatrice Webb put it long ago in their *Soviet Communism* (chap. 5), it exists to fulfil "the vocation of leadership". Without the exercise of such a vocation by a party equipped with social science, it is impossible to rally millions and lead them along the road to communism.

Lenin, in *What is to be done?*, described the party as not only the vanguard but "the tribune of the people". This, too, remains its function in socialist society. From the very nature of the state, as a special organ of administration and coercion, no state is immune from tendencies to bureaucracy, arbitrariness and even tyranny. It is for the party to represent and uphold the interests of the people in ensuring that the socialist

state does fulfil their requirements and that the people do take charge of it. How else should this be done? No democracy can function simply by agreement of the people, spontaneously and without a party to represent them and act as their voice.

The experience of the U.S.S.R. has demonstrated how real is the danger of state organs of coercion getting out of hand. This only became possible because the party itself was to some extent prevented from functioning—its democratic machinery was impaired and its members were intimidated; indeed, that was where intimidation by the Stalin regime was chiefly directed. Later, it was the action of the party which put matters to rights.

The Socialist Establishment

The socialist state and the party are the centre of what, in the terminology of a previous chapter, may be called the socialist establishment. But this establishment is so different from anything that existed previously that the use of the same word becomes doubtful.

The Communist Party came into existence and took shape in the struggle against capitalism, and the form of the socialist state wherever it is established is determined by the character of the preceding struggles and of the organisations and institutions that took part in them. In this the socialist establishment is just like any other—institutions, parties and ideas born of the struggle against the old system become the formative elements of the new establishment.

The difference begins in this, that the capitalist organisations and ideas, and the capitalist state, are products of the development of the capitalist method of exploitation and serve the purpose of upholding the exploitation of man by man; whereas socialist organisations and ideas, and the socialist state, are products of the struggle against exploitation and serve the purpose of bringing all exploitation of man by man to an end and consolidating a socialist society.

The object of the one is to impose a system of exploitation, but to do this under a disguise—not openly, but in the name of liberty, free enterprise, the rights of the individual, law and

order, religion. The object of the other is to further the complete emancipation of the whole of society from every form of exploitation and oppression, and not under any cover but in the name of human emancipation.

The development of the structure and functions of the socialist state and party and all socialist institutions, and likewise of the political, philosophical, legal, literary and artistic ideas of socialism, is undertaken with a conscious purpose of securing people's emancipation from all oppressive and limiting conditions and enabling them to live in brotherhood, producing and satisfying all their needs and developing all their capacities. Institutions and ideas all take shape in a conscious struggle to overcome whatever served the function of upholding the old methods of exploitation, and to develop whatever is useful to help build the new society without exploitation and to enrich its material and cultural life.

This difference leads to a second one. In society based on exploitation, the whole establishment serves to impose this exploitation and to justify it and make people accept it. There are propagated the biased and deceptive ideas of a minority, which are imposed on the majority; and the institutions are imposed institutions. It is quite otherwise in socialist society. There the ideas proper to the establishment teach people how to combine in association to satisfy their material and cultural needs, and the institutions serve the same purpose. Institutions and ideas are not imposed on the people, but are of the people and serve their deepest interests.

Hence instead of the institutions of society being run by a privileged few, as they are in capitalist society even when everyone has the vote, the aim is to draw wider and wider masses of people into running them. And instead of ideas being elaborated by an intellectual élite together with a corps of hired hacks (and it is sometimes difficult to make this distinction), the aim is to have wider and wider popular debate and discussion about all ideas.

Of course, all this is easier said than done. Old ways die hard. And just because socialist ideas are at first the ideas of a minority, and socialist institutions have the task of enforcing

the requirements of the new society against resistance from the remnants of the old, it is not surprising if tendencies exist towards a few authoritative persons keeping a tight hold on institutions and towards authoritarianism and dogmatism in ideas, suspicious of democratic ways and democratic discussion. However, if such tendencies should grow instead of being put down, it is to the detriment of the development of socialism. Naturally, the institutions and ideas of socialist society become enlivened and enriched as a result of the ever wider participation of people in shaping them, and become ossified and impoverished in the contrary case.

Thirdly, in capitalist and other societies based on exploitation the established institutions do not take shape to enable people to realise their common interests, but to serve the interests of the ruling exploiting class; and the established ideas likewise serve the interests of the exploiting class and cannot advance mankind's understanding of the real conditions of life except in so far as such understanding may be useful to the exploiters—apart from that, established ideas disguise reality. There is nothing to gain for socialism, on the other hand, from ideas which in any way disguise, distort or falsify things—even if a few individuals may temporarily insinuate themselves into niches where they have a vested interest in such ideas. On the contrary, the truer, the clearer and the more profound is people's understanding of nature and society, the better will their ideas serve their social purpose. Socialist ideas are developed in the search for such understanding and in the fight against whatever contradicts it. Similarly, the object of socialist institutions is to enable people to co-operate together to satisfy their needs, and they are developed by such co-operation and by removing whatever hampers it.

Consequently, the development of the ideas and institutions of socialist society is effected in the process of people's advancing their understanding of the real conditions of life and organising themselves to secure their common interests. Whatever does not satisfy these conditions gets altered, as socialism grows into communism—not as a result of any conflict of contradictory interests, but as a result of the assertion of the

community of interests.

This means that the basis for ideas about society and nature is scientific; that the basis for the development of culture and the arts is the exploration and expression of people's real relations with one another and with nature; that the basis for institutions is that they enable people to satisfy their needs; and apart from that, every kind of authority is set aside.

With the complete achievement of communism, therefore, anything resembling "an establishment" comes to an end.

Man's Mastery of Nature

Where is socialist and communist development leading?

The economic development of communist society, proceeding on the basis of man's complete mastery of his own social organisation, is first and foremost a gigantic development of man's mastery of nature. It is the mastery of nature, achieved by intelligent work, that distinguishes the human way of life from that of the lower animals. "The animal merely uses external nature, and brings about changes in it simply by his presence," wrote Engels in *The Part Played by Labour in the Transition from Ape to Man.* "Man makes it serve his ends, masters it. This is the final, essential distinction between man and other animals, and it is labour that brings about this distinction."

The opposition of man and nature, which is born as soon as human society is born, has always contained an element of antagonism, in the sense that uncontrolled natural forces threaten human existence and frustrate the realisation of human purposes. Thus in primitive society natural forces assume the proportions of menacing enemies, which have to be fought, cajoled or tricked. Natural catastrophes periodically destroy what man has made. In so far as natural forces are not understood and are not controlled, they are antagonistic to man and, even when their action is beneficent, they always contain an element of threat and danger.

In the course of the development of production, men have increasingly mastered natural forces. Increasing mastery of nature is, indeed, the essential content of material progress.

In mastering natural forces men learn their laws of operation and so make use of those laws for human purposes. Man does not master natural forces by somehow weakening them, or changing their properties and laws to suit his designs, but by learning to know them and use them, to turn them from enemies into servants.

But men's mastery of natural forces has been offset by their own subjection to the means of production which they have created in mastering them, and to their own products. They are subject to their own means of production in the sense that the cultivator is himself dominated by the soil, and the machine-minder by the machine. And when products are produced as commodities, the producers are subject to their own products, in the sense that they do not produce what they want in order to enjoy it but are utterly dependent on whatever happens to their own products in the market, where the products themselves seem to take control over the fate of the producers. And in this common subjection, man has been subject to and exploited by man.

In communist society, however, every obstacle is removed which their own social organisation offers to the furthest development of men's freedom. People now go forward without hindrance to know and control the forces of nature, to use them as servants, to remake nature, co-operating with nature to make the world a human world since humanity is nature's highest product.

In communist society the social control by associated producers over the use of their means of production and the disposal and enjoyment of their social product is at length made absolute, unqualified, unlimited. Each individual is free from the straitjacket hitherto placed on his all-round development by the social division of labour, and is free from the restriction to his satisfying his needs hitherto imposed by the necessity of paying for the means of satisfaction. In communist society, people in association, acting through the economic planning organs of society, can plan production in a complete and direct way—by simply reckoning up their productive forces and their needs, and then disposing of the productive

forces in such a way as to produce the needs.

As William Morris made his communist people say in *News from Nowhere:* "The wares we make are made because they are needed; men make for their neighbours' use as if they were making for themselves, not for a market of which they know nothing, and over which they have no control. We have now found out the things we want, and we have time and resources enough to consider our pleasure in making them."

The End of Alienation and Estrangement

With communism, then, there disappears the last vestige of the domination of man by his own means of production and his own products. Henceforward man is fully the master of his own social organisation and increasingly the lord of nature. With this, as Marx said, the prehistory of mankind ends and human history begins.

Indeed, what most profoundly distinguishes man from other animals is man's consciousness of his own aims and his conscious use of the laws of the objective world in pursuit of his aims. Hitherto men have mastered natural forces in the process of production, but have not been masters of their own social organisation. They have produced, but not been masters of their own means of production and their own products. In producing, they have created social forces and set in motion economic laws which have ruled human destinies as an alien power. That was not human history, but only the history of man in the making.

In his earliest philosophical work, the *Economic-Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*, Marx wrote of the human condition of "alienation" and "estrangement". This conception was actually the fountainhead of the ideas of communism.

As men emerge from the condition of primitive communism they begin to cut themselves free from the navel string which ties them to nature. In primitive communism the individual is so dependent on and so submerged in the group that he has hardly any individuality, and the group is tied to and dependent on its natural habitat and the means of life it

offers. Once people proceed from primitive food-gathering to food-producing, and begin as associated individuals with division of labour to interfere drastically with their natural environment, private property and exploitation begin. And with them come what Marx called alienation and estrangement.

Alienation means that what belongs to a man passes out of his possession, and may be used against him. People alienate the products of their labour; and when they are exploited, their very labour becomes alienated because, as we have seen, it is taken from them and used by others. More, with private property and class divisions, people's social creations pass out of their own control; independent of their will, they set up social relations and create institutions and organisations which they cannot control and to the action of which they become subject.

In this condition, people become estranged from one another. Of course, people desire things and it is good to possess the use of things; but now attachment to things contradicts attachment to people, and people treat one another as things to be owned and used. The possession of things becomes the great and necessary object of life, and in pursuing this object people become estranged and treat one another as means to be used to help gain possession of things.

It is easy to recognise that this condition has not been eased but has rather been worsened with the development of class-divided society. The hatefulness and inhumanity of capitalism is due to the fact that men's alienation of their own powers and products and estrangement from one another is carried to the highest pitch under capitalist conditions. Throughout the ages, artists and writers, visionaries and reformers, have been aware of this, and have portrayed its effects and struggled against them, without fully understanding their causes. Communism begins with this understanding. And the great and humane aim of communism is to end forever the human condition of alienation and estrangement.

It is then that, as Marx expressed it in his earliest writings, "the human essence" will achieve its realisation. What does

this mean? It does not mean some wonderful transfiguration of man made perfect. What is essential to the human animal, differentiating him from others, is purposive co-operation to produce the means of life. Communism simply means that this is done, with knowledge of nature and without hindrance from man's own social organisation. Communism means that people like us, with our hands and brains, sense organs and physical needs, co-operate to produce what we want and to allow to each the opportunities to benefit from the common stock of all.

What is there in this contrary to "human nature"? The idea of communism is based on scientific understanding of human nature and of the laws of man's social development. It has long been fashionable to sneer at communism as the idea of a "millennium". This sneer was answered long ago by Robert Owen, in an *Address to the Inhabitants of New Lanark*: "What ideas individuals may attach to the Millennium I know not; but I know that society may be formed so as to exist without crime, without poverty, with health greatly improved, with little, if any, misery, and with happiness increased a hundredfold."

The Future of Communist Society

The transition from capitalism to socialism is, as we now know, a prolonged and uneven process, some nations achieving socialism while others still remain capitalist or even, in some respects, pre-capitalist. It follows from this that, on a world scale, the transition from socialism to communism will also be a prolonged and uneven process, since some nations will advance to communism while others lag behind and may even still remain in the capitalist stage.

What will happen after communism? This is a natural enough question, but one which we cannot possibly answer at present, or can answer only in the vaguest terms.

In general, it may be said that there is no reason whatever to believe that the same fundamental laws of social development which have always operated will not continue to operate. For these are laws of the human condition itself.

It remains true that in carrying on production people enter into relations of production which must correspond to the character of their productive forces.

It remains true that people's consciousness is determined by their social being.

It remains true that as production develops so must new social tasks develop with it.

But instead of asserting their sway through class conflicts, crises and catastrophes, and by the frustration of men's intentions, the laws of social development will be more and more consciously utilised by associated humanity, just like the laws of nature, in the interests of society as a whole, to realise men's intentions. Associated on the basis of a common interest, men will be in full control of their own social course. They will be able to direct it by the compass of their knowledge of their own needs and of the real conditions of their social existence.

All that we can know in advance about communist society follows from what we already know about previous society, and about capitalist and socialist society in particular. Thus we know that certain features of capitalist and socialist society, which we have analysed, will have to be eliminated, and we can work out in a general way how that can be done and what sort of society will exist afterwards. Whatever goes beyond that we have no means of predicting.

When a world exists so completely different from our present world, how are we to say what the people who live in it will decide to do? Of course, we cannot say. And if we did say anything, they would take no notice of us; for what they do will be based on their own requirements, and not on ours.

At most we can venture to assert two propositions.

(1) In communist society, property has reached its highest stage of development. Private property has ceased to exist. It is simply the case that people in association make use of all the resources of nature, including their own human resources, to satisfy all their needs. These resources belong to no one in particular, the products of associated labour belong to the

whole of society, and means of consumption are distributed among the members of society according to their needs, as their own personal property for purposes of personal use. Property as we now generally understand it—as the ownership and control of means of production and products by particular individuals, groups and organisations—has, in fact, ceased to exist. That is what is meant by the highest stage of development of property.

If, then, this is what has happened to property, it will never again be the case that people will feel the necessity of changing property relations and instituting any higher form of property.

(2) At the same time, society need not stand still. There may well take place new developments of the forces of production, derived from new discoveries of science. What these will be we cannot tell—if we knew of discoveries beforehand, they would not be discoveries. Today we tend to be very impressed by the potentiality of the physical sciences, making available new sources of energy and possibilities not only of transforming the earth's surface but of travelling to the moon or other planets. It is possible that discoveries of the biological sciences may prove even more revolutionary, enabling us to control the growth of living organisms and to prolong greatly the span of human life. In any case, with new discoveries new horizons open up, new needs are felt, and old habits, ways of life, ideas and institutions are felt as a hindrance and have to be changed. For example, if the average duration of human life were greatly prolonged it is obvious that all kinds of social readjustments would become necessary to satisfy the needs of such longer life.

Hence the contradiction between the old and the new—between old forms of association into which men enter in carrying on production and new forces of production—hitherto expressed as a contradiction between existing relations of production and new forces of production, which has always been the mainspring of human progress, will continue to operate—but in new ways. It will not take the form of a conflict between existing forms of property and the new requirements of social development, but will take other forms.

And changes will not be effected without prevision as a result of conflicts, but by deliberation and discussion.

At this point it is necessary to rein in the argument and bring ourselves back to present realities. When all mankind is free from exploitation, people will live without want, in security and happiness, and will be fully capable of taking care of the future. We need not further concern ourselves about their future problems, but rather about our own problems. For the future of mankind depends on how we solve the present contradictions of society.

Conclusions

What conclusions can we draw from the materialist conception of man and his social development?

(1) Since the first phase of primitive communism, society has been based on the exploitation of working people. The wealth of the few has contrasted with the poverty of the many. And there has been continual war of class against class and of people against people.

Historical materialism enables us to understand both the past and the conditions under which we are living today, and thence to understand what it is now necessary to do and to strive for. It shows that the new forces of social production are proving to be incompatible with continued private ownership of the means of production and private appropriation of the product. They can be fully utilised and developed only on the basis of social ownership and social appropriation.

Modern science and technique are making it possible now, for the first time in history, for everyone to enjoy a high and rising standard of life, leisure, education and culture. To realise this possibility, society must take over the whole of production and plan it for the satisfaction of the needs of the whole of society.

All this means that it is not only possible but necessary to create a new social order in which exploitation is abolished and development no longer takes place through conflicts and upheavals. The epoch in which we are living is the one in

which mankind is preparing to take the decisive step towards achieving truly human conditions of life.

Thus historical materialism lights up the wonderful perspectives which lie before the present generation, the truly human conditions of life which it is the goal of socialism to establish.

(2) Socialism can be established only by breaking down the existing and long-established barriers of the monopoly of wealth and power by an exploiting class. And it is the forces of the modern working class that are in modern capitalist society equipped to make the break-through. What is necessary is to abolish the ownership of decisive means of production by the capitalist class, ownership which is not simply that of individual capitalists but of great monopoly-capitalist organisations, and to break the hold of the capitalist monopolies on political power.

Historical materialism makes clear the role of the working class in capitalist society, as the class by whose struggle socialism can be realised. At the same time, it enables us to understand how the working class itself develops and changes, to understand its relationships with other classes, to understand both the actual social forces which can be mobilised in each country and the international relationships of class forces—and so to work out the practical strategies of the struggle for socialism.

(3) Through experience of mass struggles the workers begin to be conscious of the antagonisms of their interests with those of the employers, of the need to unite and organise. But this consciousness can become socialist political consciousness only with the aid of scientific theory. Thus what is necessary for waging the struggle for socialism is the union of scientific socialism with the mass working-class movement.

To defeat capitalism and build socialism the working class must become organised politically, with working-class political parties equipped with scientific socialist theory and able to apply it in political leadership.

Many varieties of working-class party have come into existence in different countries. The Communists are not, as the original *Manifesto of the Communist Party* stressed, opposed to

all other working-class parties. The role of the Communist Party is rather in the different conditions of different countries "to bring to the fore the common interests" of the entire working people, and always to "represent the interests of the movement as a whole".

(4) Today the scientific theory of Marxism is being tried and tested, and is proving its truth in practice. The break-through which was declared to be necessary is actually taking place. And, however scarred or defaced in the processes of its emergence from the old society, the new socialist order is becoming irreversibly established.

A new world is indeed coming into existence in our time, whose growth the forces of the old are powerless to prevent.

Before our eyes, the world of capitalism is dying on its feet, torn by insoluble crisis and conflict. Its last-ditch supporters and those still not able to see past the limits of capitalist social relations may see little hope in the world today—nothing but violence and degeneration, pollution of the environment by the uncontrolled growth of industries and no-one competent to stop the rot. Yet capitalist exploitation is now abolished over a third of the land surface of the earth, peoples long bitterly oppressed by imperialism have broken free or are actively doing so, and the most violent efforts by the powers that be of the old world to keep up their rule over subject peoples have been and are being frustrated.

If we understand historical materialism we understand how all this is the stormy dawn of the new day of human society. Our final conclusion, then, is clear. All over the world the common people can and must unite to continue to defeat the efforts of the dying capitalist class to maintain its power, whether by fraud or violence. And we can and must unite to establish new socialist relations between people, the true human face of socialism which the theoretical science of society, and now practical experience, show will emerge from the long struggle for human betterment.

READING LIST

The following are the principal writings by Marx, Engels and Lenin available in English setting forth the theory of historical materialism. However, everything they ever wrote has relevance to this theory and contains an application of it. Works marked with an asterisk are the best for beginners.

MARX AND ENGELS

*The Communist Manifesto**
The German Ideology
Correspondence

MARX

Capital, volumes I, II and III
*Critique of Political Economy, Preface**
*Critique of the Gotha Programme**
The 18th Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte
Economic-Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844

ENGELS

*Socialism, Utopian and Scientific**
*Speech at the Graveside of Karl Marx**
*Ludwig Feuerbach**
*The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State**
*The Part Played by Labour in the Transition from Ape to Man**
Anti-Dühring

LENIN

What the Friends of the People are and how they Fight the Social-Democrats
Materialism and Empirio-Criticism
*Karl Marx**
*The State and Revolution**
*Imperialism**

This book, the second of three on Marxist philosophy, defines the principal concepts in terms of which Marxism understands social development — "the mode of production", "exploitation", "classes", "social-economic formations"; summarises the basic law of development of society discovered by Marx; and deals with the evolution of the "superstructure" on the economic basis. Lastly, it outlines the Marxist theory of Socialism and Communism.

This volume can be read independently of the other two. The first (Materialism and the Dialectical Method) and the third (The Theory of Knowledge) are also available.

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